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Murphy



R U S S I A

AT THE TIME OF

THE CORONATION OF ALEXANDER II.

BEING

A SERIES OF LETTERS ADDRESSED FROM MOSCOW AND
ST. PETERSBURG TO THE "DAILY NEWS."

BY

JOHN MURPHY,

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT OF THAT JOURNAL.

LONDON :

BRADBURY & EVANS, 11, BOUVERIE STREET.

1856.

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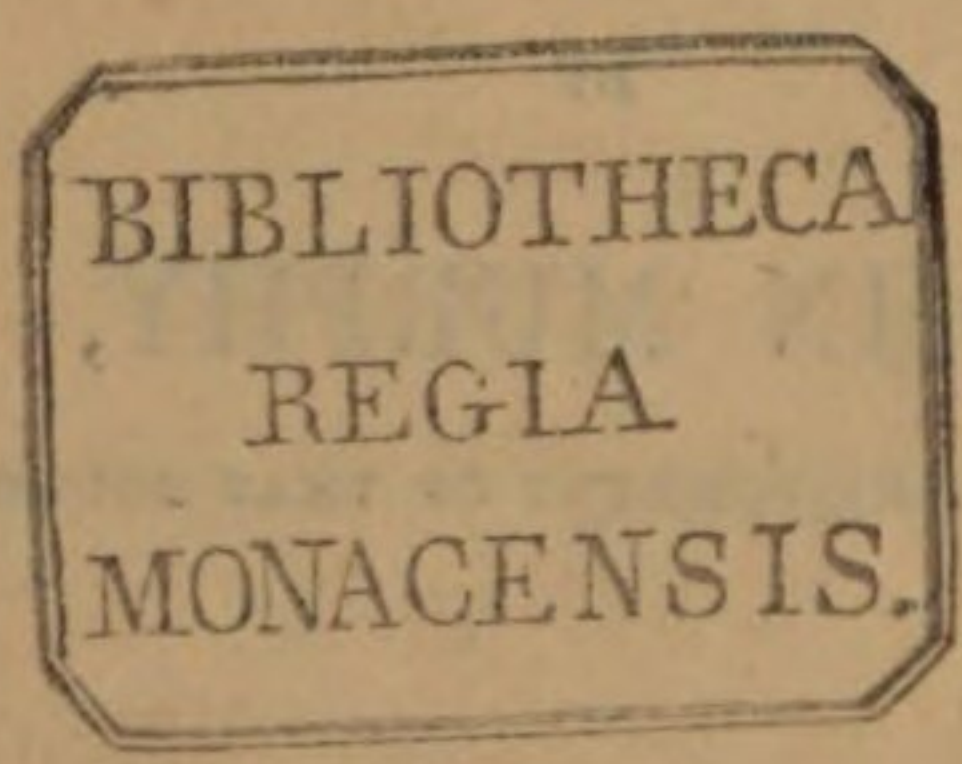
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LONDON:

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1858.

INTRODUCTION.

THE letters comprised in the following series are communications addressed by me, from Moscow and St. Petersburg, to the "Daily News," in my capacity of "Special Correspondent" at the coronation fêtes of His Imperial Majesty Alexander the Second. They were written at periods of great excitement, and when the short space of time intervening between the termination of the festivity, and the departure of the mail, rendered anything in the way of literary composition a task of no mean difficulty. What I saw I have endeavoured to describe; and I believe that in the letters will be found tolerably faithful sketches of pageants, the record of which must henceforth form part of the history of Russia. The proprietors of the "Daily News" have kindly permitted me to collect and revise them, and I have added some letters which, from one cause or another, had not been before published. Three of

them I kept back, deeming them not sufficiently "coronation" letters to justify my intruding them on the hard-pressed columns of a morning newspaper; and of the fourth and longest the transmitted copy miscarried through some neglect in one of the numerous post-offices between St. Petersburg and London. I trust that, although not directly treating of the ceremonial, they will not be considered out of place, as the incidents described arose during the researches necessary for the main object of my journey.

LONDON,
October 31, 1856.

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THE CORONATION OF ALEXANDER II.

LETTER I.

THE VOYAGE OUT.—HAMBURG.—THE ST. JEAN D'ACRE.—CRONSTADT.
—ST. PETERSBURG.—THE PREPARATIONS.

St. PETERSBURG, *August* 11.

MUCH as spectacle of every sort is prized and run after in England, it would be very difficult for even the most enthusiastic sight-seeker in the tight little island to realise the amount of excitement and expectation which the approaching coronation of the young Emperor of All the Russias is creating, not only throughout the length and breadth of his own vast empire, but in all the continental kingdoms to which his probable future conduct and career must be an object of vital interest. The promised gorgeousness of the show, the presence of the ambassadors extraordinary with their splendid retinues, the assemblage in the holy city of the various wild tribes that inhabit the more distant portions of the empire, the unparalleled military parade which is promised, have no doubt their influence in turning the gaze of all Europe towards Moscow ; but there are other and far weightier reasons why not only neighbouring nations, but, above all, the people of Russia itself, await with high hope and beating hearts the imposing

ceremonial which is to place the crown of Peter the Great on the brow of Alexander the Second.

While there can be no doubt that the memory of the late emperor is held in all the reverence which the greatness of his character and the strong nationality of his feelings deserved, it is nevertheless felt that his mission was exhausted with his life, and the people now look forward with delight to a different state of things under the more tranquil rule of his successor. Like England and France, Russia is sick of war, and she clutches all the more readily at the olive-branch, because conscious that the late struggle, whatever may have been its other results, leaves her military reputation in undiminished lustre. The "spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife," have now lost their charms for the honest Muscovites, and all the conversation in every circle is about railways, education, and peaceful internal development. The young Emperor is looked up to as the apostle of progress, and hence the unusual interest which is attached to his approaching coronation.

Indications of this gratifying state of things became apparent to your Special Correspondent at a very early stage of his journey. Even on the passage from London to Hamburg I found many persons bound for Moscow, and every one had some anecdote to tell of the new Emperor's enlightened views and amiable disposition.

Amongst other pilgrims to the holy city were two English clergymen, with their canonicals in their portmanteaus, attracted by an expectation, I cannot tell how founded, that, in the sacerdotal portion of the imperial procession, room would be found for the recognised priests of every Christian denomination. It will be somewhat of a novelty in Russian ceremonial to see two clergymen of the Church of England "assisting" the Greek Metropolitan in one of the most important duties of his sacred office.

At Hamburg we began to feel ourselves getting fairly into the vortex of the excitement. That beautiful city, which has literally risen like a phoenix from the ashes of

called,—wished to follow closely on his heels, but unfortunately he had left those important documents behind him at Vienna, and he was inexorably refused a presentation until they had arrived. Our own special embassy had its turn yesterday, under circumstances calculated to give the British people and their representative entire satisfaction. They went down to Peterhoff, the beautiful summer palace of the Czars, in the Princess Alice, and were received at the landing-place by some of the high officers of the Court. Imperial carriages were in attendance to convey them in the first instance to the English palace, where they found an elegant luncheon prepared for them, and every convenience for making their Court toilettes. They were then conveyed to the Imperial Palace, where, in the first instance, Lord Granville was presented to the Emperor at a private audience of some duration, after which his lordship presented, in succession, all the members of his embassy. The Emperor was, I understand, all cordiality and condescension, frequently addressing the persons present in the English and French languages. His Imperial Majesty's deportment is spoken of in terms of high admiration by every one who had the honour of a presentation. Subsequently Lady Granville was presented to the Empress, and in her turn presented the ladies of her suite, the Marchioness of Stafford, Lady Emily Peel, and Lady Margaret Leveson Gower. *Char-a-bancs* were in waiting, into which the whole party got at the termination of the ceremonial, and a drive round the beautiful grounds of Peterhoff filled up the time until dinner, which, like the breakfast, was prepared at the English Palace. At this banquet several of the high officers of the Court were present, amongst whom the son of Count Nesselrode was active in discharging the duties of hospitality to the distinguished guests. At eleven o'clock the whole party were safely conveyed to town in the Princess Alice, being the first time that the voyage has been performed at that late hour by a vessel of her tonnage.

So ended a very pleasant day for the British Embassy, and at the same time terminated the St. Petersburg portion of their mission, leaving them nothing to do but settle M. Dimoute's little bill, pack up their portmantaus, and proceed early next week by special train to Moscow. To-day (Friday) was a grand field-day with our Gallic allies. Being the fête-day of the Emperor Napoleon, a solemn Te Deum was celebrated at the Roman Catholic church of St. Catherine, at which all the French in St. Petersburg were invited to attend. The church, which is situated about midway down the Nevskoi Prospekt, and is rather an unpretending edifice, was of course crowded, and a great number of people formed as contracted a semicircle as the gens-d'armes would permit in the street outside. Count de Morny's carriages, with their fine English horses, made a splendid show, and elicited frequent ejaculations from the "Mujiks," which, I regret to add, were not particularly intelligible to your special correspondent. Lord Granville accompanied his French colleague, but not in state, as all the carriages "de Parade" have already been sent off to Moscow.

The scene was altogether both imposing and brilliant. The French congregation was unusually sedate and attentive; the French uniforms and decorations had all the freshness of the empire, and the spot in which the church is situated is the finest in St. Petersburg, being the centre of the finest street in the world. At the conclusion of the service I strolled down the whole length of the "Nevskoi" to the terminus of the Moscow Railway, and was perfectly astounded at its extent, the noble proportions and elaborate decorations of the houses, and the abundance and richness of the goods displayed in the various *magasins*. There are fully three miles of palaces and palatial shops, while the flagways and the road present a never-ending variety of business, bustle, and excitement. As you stroll along, a pale Circassian of the Caucasus passes you in the peculiar costume of his country. You pause to admire, and think of Schamyl

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its great fire, and is now a second Paris in architectural splendour, has for weeks been in a state of commotion with the constant succession of distinguished arrivals *en route* for the coronation. Few cities are better supplied with magnificent hotels, but they have been all crowded to overflowing, and their enthusiastic proprietors have shown their sympathy with the general Russo-mania by expanding their bills to truly imperial proportions. Even the humble drotschki-drivers have not been unmoved, but, on the contrary, became totally oblivious of all known schedules of fares, and improvised a new one which in their judgment was more worthy of the great occasion.

The British Ambassador Extraordinary, Earl Granville, arrived in the "Free City" in a very unostentatious manner in the afternoon of Saturday week, taking up his temporary quarters at the Hôtel de l'Europe—which I may mention, *en passant*, is the model of continental hotels—and started for Kiel the following evening, having in the morning attended divine service at the English church. It is to be hoped that his lordship found a moment in the intervals of his devotion to cast a glance at the rather dilapidated condition of the sacred edifice, with a view to some steps being taken at a future day towards making it more worthy of being one of the outposts of the wealthiest religious establishment in the world. The poor old church looks, indeed, desolate; and but for a rather Romish-looking picture of the Virgin and Child over the communion-table, might be taken for an overgrown station-house, rather than a religious edifice. So sudden was his lordship's departure, that Lord Ward, one of the honorary *attachés*, was left behind, and was forced to follow in the Lubeck packet, in the wake of the majestic St. Jean d'Acre. The voyage of the embassy was, I learn, most prosperous, the gallant three-decker having considerably made all her bad weather before her arrival at Kiel, inclusive of a regular gale of wind in the Cattegat, during which she was obliged to part company with her tender.

The St. Jean d'Acre is truly a noble vessel, worthy to carry the Emperor himself, and with her Union Jack at the masthead, cuts a most respectable figure amid the Russian men-of-war at Cronstadt, which, I must add, are also splendid-looking ships, and, to the unpractised eye, seem to be in the most perfect possible condition. The St. Jean made her ten knots all down the gulf, and so smooth was the water that the sailors were able to perform a play for the amusement of the distinguished company on the quarter-deck, and one of artistic tendencies succeeded in taking all their likenesses in photograph. She arrived in the middle of the day on Friday, and the ambassador and suite were honoured with a salute of twenty-one guns from the fort. The Russian authorities were not slow in giving a proof of their courteous intentions towards the distinguished strangers, but took them on board one of the small steamers usually devoted to the service of the imperial family, while the British tender was left to follow at her leisure. The Lubeck packet came in almost immediately after, and thus the temporarily separated portions of the embassy were again brought together. I consider myself fortunate in having chosen this same conveyance, as the Neva, which bears the not very foreign inscription of "Scott, Greenock" on her companion, is a remarkably fine vessel, having excellent state-rooms, a good table, and one of the most polite, careful, and attentive captains it has ever been my lot to travel with. From the moment we approached the Gulf of Finland he never left his post for a moment,—answering a special invitation to the cabin by reminding the passengers that it was just at the moment when the captain went down to dinner that the Neptune was lost, on one of those treacherous places with which the Gulf of Finland abounds. Our British tars will not, I am sure, grudge this passing compliment to Captain Kröger, his fine ship Neva, and his steady, sober, well-behaved Lubeck crew.

If there had been previously any doubt as to the

interest attaching to the approaching festivities, a glance at the cabin of the Neva would have at once dissipated the illusion. Round its dinner-table might be seen one of the wealthiest representatives of the British peerage, specially accredited to the coronation ; a Russian princess hurrying home from a German watering-place ; a General *du Génie*, summoned from Marienbad to Moscow to superintend the preparation of the *feux-d'artifice* ; Parisian modistes full of grand ideas on the all-important subject of costume ; the representative of a London newspaper ; and several wealthy Russians of the merchant class, who were in one way or other to take part in the grand affair. Even the fore part of the vessel was not without its indications that something was on the *tapis* which was likely to gather the fashionable world into Moscow, for an enterprising Frenchman had almost filled it with a speculation of parrots and monkeys, whose animated and continuous discussions left the Russian portion of the passengers no cause for regretting the deliberative assemblies of Western Europe.

The omnipresent "Murray" has of course exhausted the quiet scenery of the Trave, the smug neatness of Travemund, the islands in the Baltic, and the "features" of the gulf ; but about Cronstadt events have occurred since "Murray" was written which leave room for one or two observations. Of course, when we approached that world-renowned chain of marine fortresses, every one rushed upon deck, and spy-glasses were in instant requisition, and eager questions were asked about the famous place that had laughed at the fleets of two great nations, and at which British admirals had contented themselves with looking at the longest possible range. I must confess that at first the general feeling was one of surprise, and every one asked his neighbour, Are these the forts before which Napier hesitated, and which Dundas declined to attack ? We saw three stone forts standing at long distances across the harbour, which appeared to us not much larger than Martello towers,

and each armed with three tiers of only twelve guns. Seaward there appeared a broad expanse of water, in which a large fleet might manœuvre; and to the north the channel which Admiral Napier himself discovered, and of which, up to that time, even the Russians had no idea.

To unprofessional eyes it appeared that the prudence must have been great which prevented the attack on Cronstadt in the early part of the war. It is, however, only fair to add that the naval and military men on board were of a different opinion, the former pointing out that although the seeming expanse of water was broad, the real channel was exceedingly narrow, and the latter—amongst them was an Italian officer who had served in the defence of Rome—averring that a hostile fleet going up in twos and threes would inevitably be sunk the moment they came within range of the guns. My own opinion halted about midway between these two views. I believe that if the attack had been made early, a few ships might perhaps have been lost, but that the remainder would have given a good account of the fortress, while later, so completely was every defect supplied, so strong had every point become, that an attack would have been little short of madness. I believe that among other precautions the whole of the newly discovered north channel has been filled up with huge stones under the personal inspection of the Grand Duke Constantine. Happily such discussions are now little more than idle gossip. We hope it may be long before we engage in any struggle with Russia other than friendly rivalry, but it would have been impossible to pass Cronstadt without a few last words on a subject which has so recently engrossed the public attention of half the world.

In due time we arrived at St. Petersburg, and had a foretaste of the improved régime which every one here hopes for, in the great courtesy and forbearance of the Custom-house officers, who to my great surprise were

perfect lambs in comparison with the stern functionaries of Dover or Folkestone. They did not even open the books in my portmanteau, although the word "Russia" appeared conspicuously on the backs of every one of them. It is generally understood that this is only part of the new system, and that the new Emperor contemplates even more startling innovations than this satisfactory relaxation of the rules of the Douane. One little instance I may mention, as the straw showing which way the wind blows. In the late Emperor's time smoking in the streets was strictly prohibited, but shortly after the accession of the present, his Imperial Majesty was himself seen smoking along the quays—a quiet hint that the "counterblast" had been allowed to die out of itself. As soon as the Customs and passport preliminaries were over, and I was at liberty to make enquiries, I found that St. Petersburg is determined to rival Moscow in the splendour of its coronation-fêtes. The Americans have undertaken to illuminate the "Nevskoi Prospekt," the Regent-street of the North; the English take the Admiralty-square; and the other foreign factories are also selecting portions upon which they may exhaust their decorative taste in honour of the new Emperor.

The Russian commercial community have, I am informed, volunteered to illuminate the Moscow Railway, four hundred miles from end to end, for the Emperor's journey to and fro; and the quantity of fireworks in preparation is stated to be almost incredible. From Moscow the note of preparation returns with a portentous echo. The walls of the Kremlin are being studded with lamps, and millions of roubles are spoken of as the sums allotted by the high nobility for their *fêtes* and decorations. The public entry still stands for the 22nd, and the coronation for the 7th September, between which dates it is understood the Emperor and family will spend some days *en retraite*, according to the usage of the Greek Church. After the coronation will be the grand review, the people's banquet, the fireworks, and the *fêtes*; and about a fort-

night it is expected will restore Moscow to its normal state of tranquillity.

LETTER II.

ST. PETERSBURG.—THE IZAK CHURCH.—THE WINTER PALACE.—
THE STATE-CARRIAGES.

ST. PETERSBURG, *August 13.*

THE Stettin boat, which arrived yesterday (Tuesday), brought up an immense contingent of electors, grand dukes, princes, and princesses, all *en route* for Moscow, to take part in, or be witnesses of, the approaching august ceremonial. The packet, which had never previously had more than 100 passengers, was on this occasion obliged to accommodate 210, and the consequence was, that princes and counts—of I don't know how many quarterings—were obliged to quarter themselves as they best could,—some lying on the tables—others upon them, and a great many “camping out” on deck, and getting sea-sick, like their untitled neighbours, in the most undignified manner possible. They were all turned out on the “English Quay” at about five o'clock P.M., and were soon whirling away, in various directions, in those handsome but peculiar vehicles that give such life and picturesqueness to the banks of the Neva. If report speaks truly, very few of them will be witnesses of the actual crowning, as the Church of the Assumption—in which the ceremonial is to take place—is but a small one, while the numbers who hope for admission may be reckoned by thousands. I am informed that so great is the pressure on the space, that open-air galleries have been erected over the portico of the church, from which princes, of very high degree indeed, must be content with a passing glance at his Imperial Majesty as he enters the cathedral. Indeed, from all I can learn, Moscow has

little beyond its historical association to recommend it as the scene of an imperial pageant. Every one here says: Why not take St. Petersburg, the beautiful, the city of palaces, in which everything is on a scale of colossal grandeur, which has its Champ de Mars, in which 150,000 men may be, with ease, reviewed; its Admiralty-square, to cross which is a half-hour's walk; its unrivalled Izak Church for the sacred ceremonies, and its wonderful Winter Palace for the imperial festivities?

Through the interest of an influential English friend, I have been indulged with a minute inspection of both these edifices, and must freely admit that all I had previously witnessed in the way of ecclesiastical or palatial magnificence, fell short, indeed, of their brilliant realities. The Izak Church stands in the best situation even in this city of fine sites, and, although yet unfinished, is still far enough advanced to be made suitable, with a little exertion, for the occasion.

You can, of course, learn from the Hand-book that this yet unfinished church was commenced by the great Catherine, that its form is that of the Greek cross, and that its magnificent porticoes are sustained by immense columns composed of single blocks of Finland granite polished till it looks like porphyry, and ornamented with capitals of solid bronze. But Murray's last book on Russia was published in 1849, and since that time the Izak Church has made great progress, as well as the rest of the world. Since that time M. Montferrand, the French architect, has worked steadily and well, and has been ably seconded in the decorative portions by the skilful artists of the "English Magazin," to whom much of the costly bronze-work was entrusted. The interior of the church is now absolutely oppressive in its magnificence. The concave of the superb dome is covered with gilding and frescoes, and below there is not a corner in which the gaze is not arrested by a malachite column, a priceless mosaic, or some ornament in bronze or ormolu of the most elaborate workmanship. It is impossible

adequately to describe the sensations of the spectator when standing under the great dome ; as his eye wanders through the “ dim religious light,” which is studiously preserved, over the gilding, the colour, the form, and the dimensions of this gorgeous church, so Oriental in its splendour, so solemn in its effect, so typical at once of the boundless resources and the earnest piety of successive Russian sovereigns. It is to be finished in 1859, and its consecration is to take place on the day on which the monument of the late Emperor is to be inaugurated ; but, as I have before observed, there would be little difficulty in fitting it for the present coronation.

To the great cathedral the “ Winter Palace ” forms a striking contrast ; in the one place, the sombre sentiment of Byzantine architecture pervades everything ; in the other, all is gay, splendid, festive, and imperial. It is like an acted fairy tale, to wander from saloons, heavy with burnished gold, into the halls of the finest Carrara marble, and draped in the latest Parisian taste. Here, in a well-lighted picture-gallery, may be recognised the lineaments of all the brave soldiers who have helped to build up the greatness of the Russian empire ; there, you are almost startled with the singular elegance of an imperial boudoir with its tables of priceless mosaic,—its vases of jasper and lapis lazuli—its silver cadeaux, and its thousand and one details of luxury and refinement.

Dining-halls, ball-rooms, *salles de réception*, follow in almost interminable succession, until, at last, the eye rests almost with a sensation of relief on the little postern through which you are at last to emerge from all this magnificence. What a place for coronation festivities ! was the almost involuntary reflection, while wandering through these world-famous “ marble halls.” But, after all, the most intrinsically valuable and, at the same time, interesting, feature in the wonders of the Winter Palace, is the little chamber in which two bronze veterans guard the imperial jewels. Diamonds, rubies, emeralds,

sapphires—enough to fill Sinbad's valley—are here to be found in rich profusion, side by side, with the antique watches of successive emperors and empresses, — the aigrette of Suvaroff, and the barbaric trophies of Persian and Turkish conquests. The veteran guardians of all these treasures recounted their separate histories in unexceptionable Slavonic ; but it is to be feared that the visitors were more indebted to their gesticulations than their oratory for whatever amount of information they brought away from the cabinet. The Winter Palace has been the scene of many an imperial festival, and none can be more fitting for coronation-fêtes. For one portion of the pageant, however, Moscow is, I understand, well adapted, and that is the procession, at the head of which the young Emperor is to enter the holy city. From the Petrovski Palace to the Kremlin is about five miles, and there is plenty of room all the way for the immense cortége.

Of the splendour of the cortége I have already had a foretaste, in a preliminary inspection of the coronation-carriages, to which I was obligingly admitted by Mr. Bannister, the English superintendent of the imperial “Fabrik.” These carriages, which are of the newest and most excellent designs, and thirty in number, have all been got up in the short space of four months. They would rather astonish our insular homeliness of taste, being literally one mass of highly burnished gilding, and the linings and hammercloths of the richest Genoa velvet heavily embroidered in the same precious material. The embroidery, which is the work of the Greek nuns, is of the most exquisite design and finish, and, although only needlework, is as hard and solid as a metal casting. The trappings are of red morocco leather, almost hidden in gold, and gemmed in every part on which we put metal bosses. The effect is almost Oriental ; but it must be remembered that the Russians are an Asiatic race, and that without “barbaric pearl and gold” it would be difficult to satisfy their notions of what was fit and

proper for great occasions. But the gem of the collection is an antique open carriage of English workmanship, upon which the skill of Grinling Gibbons is displayed in some of the finest wood carving. Behind are two statuette groups of St. George and the Dragon, which have a freedom and motion that even Kiss has not attained in his much-praised work in bronze—the Amazon and Tiger. All round the carriage runs the most beautiful and delicately carved foliage ; while, on the panels, a French painter has endeavoured to emulate, in colour, the carved flowers of the great English workman. I am informed that his Imperial Majesty was particularly struck with the beauty of this carriage, and insisted on having it re-burnished and prepared for the procession.

Turning from all these grand preparations to affairs of a more every-day character, I may mention that St. Petersburg has been recently very much amused and puzzled by the sudden visit of Sir Charles Napier, and his equally sudden departure. The gallant admiral was treated with much condescension by the Grand Duke Constantine, and was, I believe, invited to a naval review, but he departed suddenly on receipt of letters from England. Many characteristic anecdotes are told of him, especially as to the way in which he parried some good-humoured taunts respecting his celebrated boast about the capture of Cronstadt—a boast which, by the way, he never made. I, who was present at the dinner given to him at the Reform Club, at which it is alleged to have been uttered, can testify that the gallant admiral indulged in no braggadocio, but was particularly cautious and reserved in his expressions and promises. It is said that when an illustrious personage asked him, “ Why he didn’t come in to Cronstadt ? ” the retort courteous of the old “ Salt ” was, “ Why didn’t you come out ? ” On another day he visited a Greek convent, where he was introduced as “ Mr. Napier.” One of the young lady pupils hearing the name, timidly inquired, whether he was any relative of the terrible admiral who was to have

taken Cronstadt ; and his answer was, "No relation at all, miss, I am the man himself." I select these two out of about a dozen that are flying about respecting the veteran of Acre, without vouching for their accuracy, but at the same time being strongly impressed with their *vraisemblance*. The official journal as yet contains no positive news about the coronation, but I believe the dates will be—Departure from St. Petersburg, August 26th ; public entry, 29th ; coronation, September 7th. It is remarkable that even the official programme contains nothing about the day.

LETTER III.

THE PRESENTATION AT PETERHOFF.—THE MUJIKS.—THE
ISVODSTCHIKS.—THE GREEK PRIESTS.

ST. PETERSBURG, *August 15.*

THE date at which I am at present writing, which is the 3rd of August, Russian time, brings the preliminary proceedings of all the special embassies pretty well to a close, at least in as far as the modern capital of Russia is concerned. Early next week, special ambassadors and all other specialties connected in any way with the grand affair will take their departure from the city of Peter the Great, and locate themselves, for a few busy weeks, in the more ancient capital in which so much of the early history of the empire was enacted. If Rurik, or Ivan the Terrible, or Boris Gudunoff could rise out of their graves, they would probably be somewhat surprised to see the arrival of the special trains which are to convey the foreign notabilities to the scene of the splendid pageant in which they are to play so conspicuous a part. Those Slavonic worthies, who looked for no invasion save those of the Tartars whom their successors now hold in such complete subjection, would gaze with no small astonishment at the

dragon of steam as it came puffing, snorting, and roaring to the station, and dragging along in its wake somewhere about five hundred persons of high and low degree, attracted from distant quarters of the world to "assist" at the solemn inauguration of the present Emperor in the government of his vast dominions. They will storm the holy city as eagerly as ever did the Tartars, but they will be valiantly met by the innkeepers, who, if they cannot eject them summarily, are determined to make them pay dear for their prolonged sojourn.

But not in Moscow alone is the working of this fine instinct of nationality perceptible in the conduct of the Russian Boniface. Petersburg is little behindhand—a fact of which, if report speaks truly, the special ambassadors have had the most conclusive indications. Already Lord Granville's parliamentary grant shows painful symptoms of attenuation; but his lordship must take comfort in the conviction that, whenever a Russian special ambassador comes to London, the patriotism of British innkeepers will give him a noble revenge. In short, there is nothing more remarkable in the history of the world than the uniformity of action that marks the conduct of hotel-keepers and cabmen on those portions of its surface upon which the progress of civilisation has given them a *locus standi*. Everywhere they look upon the traveller as an invading enemy, and "charge" him with a vigour that is generally sure to make him beat an early retreat.

The Count de Morny has, I believe, saved himself the pangs of petty extortion, by buying everything on a grand scale, even to the steamboat that takes him up and down the river, and by renting the great Woronzoff Palace, which may be seen every day surrounded by splendid equipages, and every night blazing with lights, to the great admiration of the Russian police, who walk demurely up and down the waterside of the Neva. His Excellency was early in presenting his credentials, and Prince Paul Esterhazy—"Diamond" Esterhazy, as he is

and his brave mountaineers, but he takes out a cambric handkerchief to wipe his face, and lights a paper cigar, and the romance is in a moment destroyed. You turn suddenly, and are immediately jostled by two magnificent Persians in their high conical caps and long robes of some costly Eastern material, and involuntarily quote Tennyson—"Oiled and curled like the Assyrian Bull"—as you gaze on their Ninevite physiognomies and imposing beards twisted into innumerable ebony corkscrews. Next comes a group of Russian officers, fine young fellows, nearly all over six feet, with delicate—almost English features, and wearing their long and somewhat ungraceful grey coats with commendable resignation. I must say in passing, that I have frequently had to thank those gentlemen for the ready courtesy and politeness with which they invariably answered those inquiries which a stranger is obliged to make in getting through a large city for the first time. They all speak French, and many of them English, and are ready to assist you in any little perplexity that may arise in your peregrinations. The poor Mujiks are, I believe, equally willing to oblige, but to ask them a question only exposes you to a torrent of fervent Slavonic, accompanied by the wildest gesticulations, and sometimes an extempore hornpipe, while the result is not of any very considerable assistance to your own organ of locality. I have watched these men with much interest and curiosity since my arrival in Russia, and have invariably observed them to be tall and strong, seemingly in good physical condition, and having honest and open, though not always very intelligent countenances. The universal yellow beard gives them a great air of manliness, and the manner in which they perform their work, which is often severe, indicates the possession of considerable muscular strength. The "Isvodstchiks," the Russian equivalent for cabmen, are the finest charioteers in the world. To see them urging their high-mettled Cossack horses along the Nevskoi, you would fancy the Olympic games were being enacted over again,

so rapid is their pace, so great the dexterity with which they dart in and out and over all obstacles. It is true that sometimes they leave an unaccustomed traveller behind them on the wooden pavement, but they generally find it out, and come back for him, giving him at the same time a caution to hold harder when next he rides in a drotschki. There were lots of them strolling in the Nevskoi to-day, and they seemed very jolly and contented.

A funeral next attracted my attention. The coffin was borne on a low carriage, decorated with the usual trappings, and was preceded by mutes in cocked hats, and each bearing a light enclosed in what looked very like a miniature street lamp. Greek priests followed, two and two, and looked exceedingly venerable in their sacerdotal robes, and long flowing beards. They are generally tall and handsome men, and are studiously graceful and stately in the performance of their religious rites. However, as I shall no doubt have better opportunities of observing them at Moscow, I shall not permit their peculiarities further to elongate the present letter.

LETTER IV.

(NOT BEFORE PUBLISHED.)

THE NEVA.—THE ISLANDS.—TSARSKO SELO.—THE EMPEROR'S
BATTUE OF THE THIEVES.

St. PETERSBURG, *August 17.*

THE presentations having all terminated, and the ambassadors and their suites being all in the agonies of packing up, there is a sort of interregnum in the coronation business, at least in as far as the outsiders are concerned, and I think I cannot better fill it up than by taking a passing glance at some of the "Lions" of the northern capital, which I have visited during my sojourn. The hotel at which I stop is situated on the

English Quay, and from its balcony may be obtained one of the finest city-views in the world. In front runs placidly the blue Neva whose clear waters often tempt the unwary traveller to draughts which terribly derange his digestive functions, and upon whose broad bosom, large and small steamers, caïque-like boats, and strange looking barges are constantly passing up and down. One of them, covered with a complete mountain of wood, has just been moored opposite my window. A landing-place has been improvised by pushing an immense stone out of the loosely constructed quay-wall, and the pious crew are all grouped on the fore-castle and are commencing their humble breakfast, according to their invariable custom, with prayer. It is quite touching to see these rough, hirsute men, clad in sheepskin, how reverently they kneel, and how devoutly they cross themselves before they venture to touch a meal, which after all is nothing but black bread and water. I verily believe that the Russian peasantry are the most earnestly devout people in the world, about one-fifth of their waking-time being passed in crossings and genuflexions, which would be grotesque, but for the evidently real religious sentiment that inspires them. A government steamer now passes up the stream, and a marine clad all in white paces the little quarter-deck. He sees the men of the barge at their devotions, and even Russian discipline relaxes while he makes a sympathetic sign of the cross in company. My eye follows in the wake of the graceful vessel, and soon alights on the noble bridge of St. Nicholas, over which a black human current is constantly passing to and fro. At the farther end, right in the centre of the roadway, is the shrine of the saint, in the interior of which is his picture; and the coffin of the Prophet at Mecca has not a more constant or reverent crowd of worshippers. There are young girls, sedate matrons, cuirassiers armed to the teeth, Mujiks green and blue, men in broadcloth, and ladies in brocades, all bobbing, crossing, and praying in wrapt devotion, wholly

unmindful of the infidel Asiatics who pass with a sarcastic smile, or the square-built Englishman who honours them with his peculiar, placid stare. A clergyman of the Church of England, who stood by my side as I watched the proceedings through a glass, made an observation, which I think is worth preserving.

“This may be superstition,” he said, “but there is one thing about these Russians that I like, and that is, that none of them, high or low, are ashamed of their religion. Whatever it ordains they practise before men without fear or hesitation, and their tolerance is equal to their moral courage. In many countries such impertinent gazers as we now see on the Nicholas Bridge, would soon be insulted by the devotees.” I was struck with this observation of my reverend companion, and had subsequently, more than once, reason to subscribe to its justice.

I have devoted one of my spare days, lately, to a journey over this bridge, and into the enchanted region of the Islands, which imperial wealth and taste have rescued from the swamps of the Neva. A rapid drive through Vassiliostroff, which may be called the English quarter, being principally occupied by English families, or people of English descent, brought us into a complete labyrinth of green lanes and “oak openings,” through whose verdant vistas might be discerned the summer palaces of the Russian nobility, and the handsome country-houses of the Petersburg merchants. One of the handsomest of these residences is the Villa of the Princess Trubetskoy, a lady of immense wealth, and who, it is said, has allotted a million of silver roubles for her coronation expenses at Moscow. It was sunset when our carriage arrived at her park-gate, and I was somewhat surprised to find the whole road blocked up with vehicles of various kinds, as if some grand gathering had taken place. I was soon enlightened, however, by the information that the Princess, once in every week, throws her beautiful grounds open to all comers; and, still better, provides an excellent band at her own

expense for their amusement. She has had several soirées since the arrival of the embassies, and has been profuse in her invitations to the officers of the St. Jean D'Acre, whose blue and gold uniforms have become quite popular in St. Petersburg. Nothing can be more genuine than the polite hospitality of the noble hostess on these occasions, but I believe that the younger officers find the Russian ball-room etiquette rather formal for their tastes. One gay lieutenant complained to me that no sooner had he got "under-weigh" with a charming partner in a delightful waltz, than he was obliged to hand her over to another, the custom here being that you only dance once round the room with the same lady. This equalises the distribution of partners when ladies are scarce, but it is certainly rather hard on a dashing young lieutenant just as he has got "suited to his mind."

When we had satisfied ourselves with a careful inspection of the Villa Trubetskoy and its beautiful grounds, and listened to a fine overture by the band, the hospitable friend, in a corner of whose comfortable carriage I had travelled thus far, proposed that we should still further explore this truly sylvan country, and finish by a visit to the little snugery in which he himself was wont to brush away the cares of business and town life, and smoke a mild cigar in the cool of the evening. On we went at a rattling pace, down grassy avenues, over which huge trees made an almost impervious roof, across rustic bridges spanning sparkling sheets of the clearest water, upon which the newly arisen moon was just beginning to cast her silver sheen. We passed several groups of rough looking peasants as we drove rapidly along, and often I feared that the reckless Jehu would run down some of the poor people, whom, albeit of his own order and condition, he seemed to hold in the most sovereign contempt.

In close imitation of our London cabmen, he never called out until his horses' noses were touching the Mujik shoulders, and then he favoured them with a volley of

abuse in vigorous Slavonic, if he did not think they were sufficiently alert in getting out of his way. All these proceedings made me, I confess, a little fidgety, because I had been previously informed that the penalty for running over foot-passengers in Russia was, Siberia for the coachman, confiscation for the carriage and horses, and heavy penalties for the inside passengers. I knew, therefore, that if we should be so unlucky as to overturn any of these peaceful pilgrims, coachee would start off as if all St. Petersburg was at his heels, and realise for us the sensations of Mazeppa on his wild horse, rather than be caught in the fact. Seeing that it was now night-time, that the water alternated at about every fifty yards with the land, that the bridges were narrow and of frail construction, and that our horses were steeds of the Ukraine, who possibly had been transferred from the steppe to the stable without much intermediate training, the prospect of a race with the knout in perspective was certainly by no means tranquillising to an Englishman, who some three weeks before had been walking peaceably down the Strand, and whose most exciting race had been an effort to catch the Kennington 'bus.

But we got safe through, thank Heaven ! and were soon comfortably seated in an extremely odd-looking Alpine sort of cottage, the ground floor of which was occupied by a German family, and the upper storey, which overspread it like an immense umbrella, formed the summer retreat of my friend. An odd company, consisting of an Englishman and an Irishman, an Italian and an Anglo-Russian, *i. e.* a Russian of English descent, were soon seated round a table on which were spread in abundance the substantialities of English and the rarities of Russian fare. The strangers were, of course, anxious to begin with the caviare ; which, however, in consequence of the time of year, could only be had in its preserved form, and appeared to me, very like paste-blackening soaked in vinegar. My Italian friend, however, went at it with all the gusto of an enthusiast ; and I

may add here, subsequently paid the penalty of his epicurism in an attack of cholera, which nearly ended all his earthly troubles. But then we had the real veritable Clicquot, “Veuve” Clicquot, in the quiet-looking, clumsy orthodox bottles, with the fragments of ice sticking to their burly sides, and their black leather cravats slung jauntily round their slender necks. I tasted, and ceased to wonder at the infatuation of Prussia’s monarch, for truly it is the only modern realisation of the mythic nectar. We know little of it in England, for there are few English wine-merchants on the venerable widow’s list, and beyond that list there is not a single bottle to be had for love or money. The true Clicquot is of a bright golden colour, rich rather than sweet in flavour, and “brisk” to the outside edge of vinous vivacity. When served in a clear bell-shaped glass, with a hollow stem, up which the bubbles mount in a never-ending column of diamonds, it is a picture to look at, the taste can only be judged of by actual experiment. Another property of the genuine liquid is, that it never makes you ill, however copious may have been your libations, so that there is not a single blemish to abate the imperial pre-eminence of this Czar of the wine-cellar.

While we were thus making ourselves comfortable with all the good things which a most liberal hospitality had collected for our refection, the weather suddenly changed, the thunder began to peal overhead, the rain came down in torrents, and we all at once remembered the poor Isvodstchik, whom we had left with the horses outside. To call him in was our next impulse, but previously our Anglo-Russian friend, who knew his countryman’s palate, undertook to prepare him a “night-cap.” I must confess, that some reminiscences of a certain brewage that takes place in the first act of Macbeth crossed my mind, as I saw my friend collect all the half-emptied glasses and pour their contents successively into one large sugar-basin. Down went Clicquot, then brandy, then Scotch ale, then London porter, then “Tschai,” then

Cassellet's Moscow entire, then pepper and mustard, and, lastly, some highly acidulated lemonade, as he said, "just to give it a flavour." I trembled as I watched our grim-looking coachman clear away his matted beard from his lips, and with his two hands raise this portentous beverage to his head. But my alarm was perfectly unnecessary. In one long draught he finished the bowl, and the sigh of satisfaction he gave as he placed his hand on his heart, or some neighbouring region, when he had done, showed how well the caterer had gauged the palate of the guest. I verily believe that if we could have reduced the caviare, and cold beef, and Indian pickles to a liquid form, he would have been only too happy to toast our health in a second libation. The style in which he rattled us home again afforded ample proof, of how well "the mixture" had suited his constitution. As we whisked rapidly along, the sentinels at the various guard-houses shouted "Who goes there!" in the language, and with the lungs of Thor, to which the English travellers answered in their own vernacular, selecting some rather strong expressions from the insular vocabulary, which, however, seemed to be entirely satisfactory to the Russian soldiers, who let us continue our journey without further molestation.

My next excursion was to Tzarsko Selo, not to see the palace, although it is said to have cost millions of roubles, but to spend an evening in the public gardens, which private enterprise, taking advantage of the imperial railroad, the first constructed in Russia, had erected in the neighbourhood, and which in the summer season are crowded by all the fashionables of St. Petersburg. I was anxious to judge, with my own eyes, as to whether the managers of the Russian Cremornes and "Surreys," were more successful than our own Simpsons and Tylers in catering for the public amusement. So economical they certainly are not, for the ticket of admission at Tzarsko Selo costs nearly three times as much as at either of our famous London summer gardens. I found the

gardens to be of limited dimensions, but rather tastefully laid out, and hung all over with festoons of paper-lanterns, which, later in the evening, were to form the illumination. Some of these cheap decorations struck me as being exceedingly pretty in form and colour, and as offering patterns which might be followed with advantage by our English decorators.

At one side was a light, graceful, rustic orchestra, of trellis-work and flowers—I hate your formal, classic mockeries in white and mud colour, with Beethoven busts and lyres, and the other orchestral conventionalities—and in that orchestra, a band, for which it will be enough to say that it was led by Johann Strauss, the son and worthy successor of THE Strauss, so long the monarch of the saloons of Paris and Vienna. We had music of the first class for the connoisseurs, and brisk, merry waltzes for the general. Amongst other things, and decidedly the hit of the evening, was a composition of the conductor's, which might make even the unapproachable Jullien a little envious. Struck by the tremendous rumbling accompaniment that marked every bar, I asked a Russian officer what it was all about, and was informed it was the last novelty, called the “Skittle Polka,” and that the noise I heard was the harmonious knocking down of the pins. I now listened attentively, as my kind interpreter translated the shouts and noises with which the orchestra marked the progress of the game. First there was a jerking, irregular movement, that was setting up the pins, then a tremendous bang and a sympathetic crash from the orchestra, when I was told that the first ball had cleared the half of them away. Then came the betting and the excitement, voices in loud tones mixing with a tune something like the post-horn galop, the audience meantime laughing and clapping their hands with a vigour that showed how fully they understood and sympathised with what was going on. At last there was a tremendous shout of “All down” (in Russ),

and the Polka finished with a merry burst of dance-music.

The garden was crowded with Russian officers and ladies, the former in the eternal gray redingote, and the latter in every variety of Parisian costume. One of the officers was a perfect giant, upwards of seven feet high, and the decorations with which his immense chest was covered, showed that he had not allowed his strength to be eaten up with rust. He was an object of general curiosity, partly on account of his lofty stature, but chiefly in consequence of a well-known brilliant achievement on the battle-field. I was told that, when the battle of the Tchernaya was at its height, seeing his commanding-officer struck down, he had rushed into the thickest of the fire, and bore the body away on his shoulder. It is also said that the French and Sardinians, struck by the devoted heroism of the act, ceased firing until he had retired with his prize. I hope the story may be true, as it shows that the spirit of the old chivalry still survives in the fierce contentions of modern warfare.

We finished with fireworks, which were by no means bad, and which sent the whole audience, officers, ladies, and plebs, to the forms, which they mounted, without the slightest regard for the perspective of the little people. Pickpockets rose immediately, like the imps in the pantomime, and began actively to practise their ingenious calling. Then came confusion, then rows, then arrests, then the most heart-rending protestations of innocence from young gentlemen whose hands had been actually caught in elderly gentlemen's coat-pockets. I felt that I was in a civilised country, and instinctively looked round for A 51. But A 51 was represented on this occasion by a grim-looking gendarme, and a considerably more grim-looking Cossack, who dragged off the misguided youth between them,—I suppose to Siberia and the knout.

Little events of this kind naturally afforded those who

were not completely absorbed in the fireworks, abundant topics for conversation. My kind translator of the Skittle Polka, who was still at my elbow, told me that the garden and its neighbourhood was quite a paradise of security now, to what they had been a few years before, when the thieving, gaming, and drinking, were suddenly brought to an end by a masterly *coup*, for which he could not find words sufficiently strong to praise the late Emperor. It seems that the Emperor Nicholas had had constant complaints of the doings at Tsarsko-Selo, and had as regularly referred the matter to the police. But the latter, who were nearly as corrupt as his councillors of state and *Ministres du palais*, kept their eyes shut to the doings of the thieves, while their hands were ever open for the liberal contributions of the latter. At last, the Emperor, wearied out of all patience, took the matter into his own hands, and cured the evil by means of a truly imperial remedy. Selecting one fine Sunday afternoon, when the gardens were at their fullest, the whole district was in a moment invaded by clouds of Cossacks, and every man, woman, and child, gentle and simple, officers, priests, laymen, and ladies, were arrested in a moment, and packed off by successive special trains to St. Petersburg. There was not one of them who had not to pass through the bureau of the secret police, and in doing so to tell his or her name, address, occupation, and the motives of the journey which had been thus suddenly interrupted. This operation, gone through with five or six thousand people, of course, occupied several days, and in the meantime, all St. Petersburg was in agonies about missing husbands, wives, and children. At last the prisoners were thoroughly sifted, the thieves identified and packed off to prison, and the decent people restored to the bosoms of their families. The plan was thus completely successful, but I doubt if it would find favour in Scotland Yard.

LETTER V.

PRINCE ESTERHAZY'S HOUSE.—THE VISITORS.—THE BLESSING OF

THE APPLES.—PETERHOFF PALACE.

St. PETERSBURG, *August 19.*

At about ten o'clock this morning the second and last division of the British embassy-extraordinary left their hotel for Moscow, Lord Granville having departed the day before. On the whole, I do not think they have had any reason to be dissatisfied with their sojourn in St. Petersburg, where they have received every suitable attention, although certainly their presence has not caused as much stir and excitement as that of their French allies, who have been seen everywhere in their splendid equipages, and doing the thing in grand style at their magnificent hotel. The English residents here, however, console themselves with the reflection that it is the French manner to make a splendid burst at first, either in war or parade, and afterwards suddenly to subside, after the manner of their own delightful champagne. The British embassy, it is thought, will come out strongest at Moscow, whither all the plate and state carriages have been sent, and where a saloon has actually been built, as I understand, in order that our ambassador may have ample scope and verge to do justice to our proverbial insular hospitality. The rivalry between the special embassies will, I believe be considerable, and a rather humorous indication of it has already got into circulation. It is said that Prince Esterhazy's agent at Moscow, from having been early in the field, was able to obtain a suitable house for his serene highness at the moderate charge of 17,000 roubles the month, but that the Prince subsequently hearing that the British and French ambassadors were respectively paying 40,000, he indignantly cancelled

his contract, and insisted on having a house at the same price. The serene ambition was easily gratified. A new coat of paint, a new name, and a new rate of rental, soon brought the original house up to the Prince's notion of what was suitable for the representative of the Emperor. As I am now about to start for Moscow in the wake of greater people, I think I cannot do better than collect in this my last Petersburg letter all the minor incidents of the past week connected with the approaching pageant, and the proceedings of our special embassy, the members of which of course, like other people, immediately after their arrival, scattered themselves about to enjoy the sights with which this magnificent city abounds.

One of them, a nobleman whose long residence in Italy has, I believe, made him an admirer of religious ceremonial, took the opportunity of being present at the Smolensko *fête*, an annual festival to which the Mujiks repair to weep, and subsequently feast actually over the graves of their deceased relatives. While his lordship was gazing on this interesting scene, one of the least absorbed of the mourners contrived to abstract his watch and chain, in a manner that would have done honour to a London professional, to the great surprise of the aristocratic observer of Russian national customs. A greater wonder, however, yet remains to be told, which is, that his lordship is likely to get it back again through the agency of the English *magasin*, the thief having by an odd coincidence brought it to one of the workmen, employed in that establishment, for sale. Should he do so, it will be looked upon as rather a novelty in St. Petersburg, as the Russian police are almost as subject to legal doubts as the late Lord Eldon, when called upon to decide on the restoration of stolen property. Lady Peel drives about almost daily, looking quite fascinating in her "wide-awake" hat, much to the astonishment and admiration of the Russian fashionables; and Lord and Lady Stafford pay frequent visits to their graceful little yacht,

now lying at anchor in the Neva. The Emperor has intimated his intention of inspecting this vessel before she leaves, although, from the incomplete state in which she was hurried away from England, she can hardly be said to be in suitable trim for an Imperial visit. Lord Stafford intimated so much to his Imperial Majesty, but the latter would take no denial; and the visit will, I believe, certainly come off. Fortunately for the visitors, the week has been signalised by two important religious solemnities, to which the Russian people attach the greatest interest and importance. I allude to the blessing respectively of the water and the apples, which is performed with all the pomp and ceremony of the Greek church. The first was solemnised at Peterhoff, in the presence of the Emperor, on a small piece of ornamental water consecrated for the purpose. The Greek prelates and priests walked in procession, dressed in their most gorgeous vestments, followed by the Imperial family, also walking; and, when they came to the waterside, the Cross was plunged in, the choristers singing a solemn chaunt as the officiating prelate performed the rite. The distance from town prevented the presence of many strangers, but I recognised some English faces amongst the crowd.

The second, "The blessing of the apples," a ceremony which forms an indispensable preliminary to the mastication of that refreshing fruit, took place yesterday in every church throughout St. Petersburg, but with peculiar pomp in the Kazan Cathedral, by the metropolitan and fifteen officiating priests. The costumes were most gorgeous, and the Archbishop, who was robed in the middle of the church, was one blaze of gold and jewels. The ceremonies, which seemed exceedingly complex, consisted of numerous genuflexions, and symbolic groupings on the part of the priests, who formed themselves into squares, triangles, and other figures typical of the Trinity, the Tabernacle, and the various doctrinal data of Eastern Christianity. The congregation, amongst which there was no classification, and who stood the whole time of service,

was of the most varied appearance and character. Russian princes, and generals covered with decorations, prayed side by side with the poor Mujik, and both seemed equally impressed with the solemnity of the occasion ; while the Russian countess, in the most fashionable Parisian toilette, did not feel her dignity ruffled by the vicinity of the poor Livonian or Finland woman, whose quaint national costume gave wonderful variety to the scene. In the churches here there are no carefully stuffed pews or separation of ranks—all pray together, and perform their genuflexions, which are exceedingly numerous, in the same earnest and profoundly devout manner. Indeed, I have had frequent occasion to remark, since my arrival, an affability on the part of Russian people of distinction to even the humblest of their countrymen, which might be imitated with advantage by the English aristocracy, even in cases where the line of social demarcation is by no means so broad. But this by way of parenthesis.

After the service came a sermon, the text and character of which I took the trouble of ascertaining for the edification of your more serious readers. The preacher, Sydnowski, is a man of great eloquence and talent, and, in consequence, of so much influence amongst the masses as to be almost a power in the state. He has, I am informed, suffered persecution from his more conservative brethren for his advanced opinions ; but, however that may be, he is now one of the most popular preachers in the capital. His text was, “The Lord is my strength and my shield,” and his discourse, which he dexterously applied all through, not only to the text, but to the occasion, was, judging from the rapt attention and occasional emotion of the people, most eloquent. That it was delivered with both grace and fervour was apparent even to those who did not understand a word of the language. At the conclusion of the sermon, the Metropolitan came forward and solemnly blessed the people, the apples, and finally himself, and a hymn

of almost unearthly solemnity terminated the ceremonial.

I should mention that the Russian choral singing is very peculiar, having on one side the trebles, on the other the basses, the latter of peculiar depth and force, being selected from the whole population of the empire, without any consideration of expense. The boys, who have beautiful voices, sing, for instance, "The Lord have mercy on us," and hardly has the lute-like sweetness of their tones fixed the ear, when, from the other side, the tremendous basses thunder forth the same burthen in reply. This music, which is without instrumental accompaniment, sounds strangely at first, but soon begins to attract by its strange and unearthly solemnity. It must also be observed that almost every person, whether priest or chorister, employed in the service of the Greek church, is of tall stature and commanding presence, so that nothing is wanting to give effect to the general *coup-d'œil*.

Sunday last was appointed by the Emperor for the double purpose of receiving the cordon of the Legion of Honour, and of having the officers of the St. Jean d'Acre presented. As a preliminary to both proceedings, which took place at Peterhoff, his Imperial Majesty attended divine service in the church attached to the palace, and which is exclusively devoted to the Emperor and court. I was fortunate in getting a very near view of the Imperial family, and therefore took very little notice of the bewildering variety of uniforms that filled the vestibule. Alexander the Second is a slight well-made man, above the middle size, but nothing approaching the Jove-like proportions of the late Emperor. His face is quite German, with a mild, almost saddened, expression, but full of thoughtfulness and intelligence. His Majesty's close application to business, which is well known, may affect his looks, but certainly he has by no means the appearance of robust health. He drove up to the palace in an open carriage without the slightest parade, and

received into his own hands the petitions of a number of poor women who were permitted thus to approach the fountain-head of authority. This custom, which puts one in mind of the Arabian Nights, is only followed in certain cases, as it must be obvious that, if general, it would occupy the entire time of the Emperor.

As his Majesty received them there was not the slightest appearance of hauteur on his part, nor of undue servility on that of his fair petitioners, who simply curtsied in a business-like off-hand way, and retired much more composedly than I have seen municipal dignitaries do in England, when they were permitted to approach the throne. I mention this little incident to show that, however despotic the government of this country may be in theory, it is much ameliorated in practice by the personal deportment of people in authority, from the Emperor on his throne, the fountain of honour, favour, and fortune, down to the humble “Budishnik”—generally pronounced bootjack by early students in Slavonic—the Russian policeman, who tells you about fifteen times a day that it is not permitted to smoke in the street, and politely points out the announcement to that effect in the French language, which is hung up in his little guard-house. I have now read it so often that it is completely imprinted on my memory, but I always find that a few civil nods and winks—beyond that, as Albert Smith says, the conversation is apt to flag—and in extreme cases a cigar or five copecks, gets me out of the difficulty, and appeases the outraged dignity of the law.

In the late Emperor's time the prohibition was rigidly enforced, but the present Czar smokes himself, and has walked through the streets with a cigar, and his loyal subjects have not been slow in following his example. At present, people smoke pretty generally in the northern capital. The Empress, who followed her august spouse into the church, is a tall, lady-like woman, but beyond that nothing remarkable. Her toilet was in excellent taste, very similar to that of the Empress Eugenie, whose

figure is not unlike that of the Czarina. The young archdukes are all fine hearty little fellows, give the salute with true military precision, and look quite smart in their tiny uniforms, each being of course colonel of a regiment. The Czar himself wore the dress of the Gardes à Cheval, one of the most tasteful in the service.

After prayers came the court, the presentations, and the decoration, and all the while the grand fountains played, and the people on the terrace could divide their attention between the glittering crowds that filled the windows of the palace, the grim gigantic Cossack footmen, in full national costume, the splendidly dressed negroes, the relics of more barbaric times and courts, and the murmuring cascades on the other side, through whose long vista of diamond spray, they could see the Gulf of Finland, the natural boundary of the Russian empire. The taste of these fountains, which cost millions of roubles, is by no means severe. The water falls over terraces of blue and gold, and the jets are sent forth by Samsons, dryads, frogs, and dolphins, of the brightest gilding and colours. The effect is excellent, and as every one seems to like them, we must suppose them to be well designed, whatever the high art dictators may say to the contrary. I should add that Peterhoff, which during the past week has been a great centre of attraction, is approached by a service of small steamers very punctually and regularly performed, and constantly well filled with passengers. To give an idea what the channel is, it will be only necessary to state that we grounded twice going down last Sunday, and this although the captain is supposed to be familiar with every inch of the way. I am afraid that a flotilla of hostile gunboats would be sadly puzzled in these waters. This morning, and this is my last bit of St. Petersburg news, the regalia were sent off by the railway to Moscow. There was a grand procession of Imperial carriages, through the window of one of which the great diamond crown could be seen, to the station, escorted by the Chevalier Garde, and the whole of the

Nevskoi was crowded with people, as the interesting *cortége* drove past. St. Petersburg will henceforth be a desert until after the coronation, and Moscow for one month at least will witness a revival of its old populousness and splendour.

LETTER VI.

MOSCOW.—THE RAILWAY JOURNEY.—THE GRAND DUKE CONSTANTINE
—FIRST IMPRESSION.

Moscow, *August 21.*

I SHALL not soon forget the fatigue and anxieties of the twenty-four hours' journey by railway which has at last landed me safely, this day, in the holy and truly beautiful city of Moscow. The run is at any time no mean achievement, but the trouble is tenfold increased at the present moment by the unexampled influx from all parts of the world of "distinguished foreigners," civilised and uncivilised, which is now overflowing the palaces, the inns, and the lodging-houses.

When I entered the railway station at the top of the Nevskoi, yesterday morning, I was reminded of London Bridge on the Epsom morning, with this difference, that instead of sporting men, jockeys, and the metropolitan holiday folks, I found myself surrounded and almost overwhelmed by princes and mujiks, Circassians and Georgians, handsome Greeks and ugly Tartars, ladies in Parisian toilettes, and their bonnes in the national caftan and coronet, Jews and Slovacks, Poles and Hungarians, priests and Levites; in short, every variety of costume, colour, and odour that distinguish the varied races composing the great Russian nation. To do them justice, they were not half so unruly as the crowd to which I have just now compared them, but they were legion, and their luggage—such luggage!—which had all to be passed

through a window and weighed, and which seemed as if it would have required the Leviathan steam-ship to supply the requisite accommodation. Nineteen, twenty-five, even fifty packages were no unusual amount for a single passenger; and then some of them as big as a sugar hogshead were hoisted up by sheer force of mujik muscle, and deposited composedly on the heads of those who by long struggling had secured an inside place for themselves and their little portmanteaus next the receiving window. It was a desperate case, the officer was bewildered; but a few cabalistic words in his ear, and a corresponding cabalistic sign in the palm of his hand, had a wonderful effect in clearing his intellect and enabling him to select the correct carpet-bag with creditable acumen. Then there was the pass to be stamped, and the ticket to be paid for, and the place to be taken, the latter by no means an easy task, as the military officers and their ladies, who are privileged to enter everywhere and before everybody, had secured all the seats—not only for themselves, but for their smaller luggage, their Italian greyhounds, parrots, and railway wrappers.

However, at last we were fairly afloat, and trudging leisurely along our little journey of six hundred and seventy versts, at the rate of about twenty miles an hour. The first-class carriages, which are constructed on the American plan, are comfortable and even elegant; and the power of walking up and down, and occasionally stepping out on the little gallery at the end for a mouthful of fresh air, very much diminishes the weariness of the almost interminable journey. We had as our fellow-passengers Russian generals *en route* for the review, Russian countesses ditto for the balls, and Russian and German doctors speculating on the probable effects of the dinners. In one corner of our “waggon” sat a Circassian prince, some juvenile Schamyl perhaps, magnificently attired in his national dress, tastefully harmonised with the uniform of the Russian army. He was a remarkably fine-looking man, and seemed as happy and

contented as if nothing had ever occurred to cause a difference of opinion between him and the Georgian Viceroy. He was on the best terms with the Russian officers, and chatted and smoked with them all day long.

The country through which we passed was as uninteresting as could possibly be imagined. For the first one hundred versts it was bare and level as a steppe, without a single tree to break the monotony of the prospect. But as we neared Moscow, and left St. Petersburg further behind, the landscape became more mellow; clumps of trees first appeared, then plantations, while the open country became tinted with the green of the meadow or the golden hues of the corn-field. Now and then the fantastic spires of a Greek monastery cut the horizon, and comfortable farm-houses gave reassuring indication of human habitation. Then we had little rivers to cross, over well-constructed bridges; and one of greater pretensions, called, I think, the Nidska (I do not pledge myself to the orthography), covered with a flotilla of curiously constructed barges bringing down corn from the Volga for the consumption of the capital.

We had rain in light showers, even down teems and perfect torrents, with now and then a flash of lightning or a gleam of sunshine; and, lastly, some regular stoppages on the road, varying in duration from ten minutes to two hours, and giving the nobles ample time for their *tschai* and the mujiks for their darling *vodka*. You may depend upon it, the opportunity was not neglected, as at every station the refreshment-room exhibited the most motley groups imaginable, while the waiters were embarrassed at once by the pressure of their duties and the scarcity of change. Indeed, I cannot call to my mind a single instance in which these truly conscientious men, being entrusted with a three-rouble note, were enabled to get back to the passenger who had entrusted it to him before the departure of the train.

At, I think, our sixth station, we were comforted by the agreeable intelligence that we must wait an hour and a half

extra in order to allow the passage of a special *convoy* containing the Grand Duke Constantine and his suite. I was comforted under the delay by being enabled to get an excellent view of his Imperial Highness, who came down upon the platform, and nodded to and chatted with everybody about him. It was pleasing to see the confidence with which the humblest people came up quite close to him, and the off-hand, friendly way in which he received their compliments. There were no soldiers, no butt-ends of muskets to keep off the common herd, but everything was trusting, kindly, and without any affectation of condescension. I believe that in consequence of his identity of name with his uncle, and the way in which he has been mixed up with recent naval operations, he is looked upon in England as a very terrible fellow, both in appearance and manners ; but nothing can be further from the reality. He is a tall, slight, well-made, fair-haired and blue-eyed young man, with good features and a pleasant expression, and seems to be on the best terms with himself and everyone about him. He is, in short, the last man in the world whom from his appearance I should reckon dangerous or disagreeable. Besides this, he has a considerable reputation for wit and sarcastic humour, and many of his sayings are in general circulation. I shall give you one or two as specimens.

To enable you to understand the first, I must premise that it is alleged that the Americans, whose wonderful sympathy with Russia during the last war it was so difficult to understand, have made several excellent speculations in this country ; amongst others, the contract for keeping the Moscow Railway in repair, by which it is said they nett a clear profit of some £200,000 a-year. The Grand Duke, who is dissatisfied with this job, as well he may be if the figures be correct, had lately some distinguished friends on a visit, whom he handed over to his chamberlain to show them the sights of the capital. One day he asked that officer whether his friends had seen all the sights, and being answered in the affirmative, said,

laughing, "Then go and show them the American contract, which is decidedly the greatest curiosity that could be exhibited in any country." The second story applies to his Imperial Highness's early days. He was, as is well known, appointed to the nominal command of the fleet when a child, but even at that early age was anxious to make it a reality. One day, when on board a man-of-war, he promoted an officer who pleased him, but the appointment was not confirmed, while the young admiral was reproved. The next morning he appeared before the Emperor in full uniform and tendered his resignation, adding that he was no admiral if he could not promote whom he liked. It is needless to add that this youthful burst caused considerable amusement in the highest quarter, and that the resignation was not accepted. But the Grand Duke has now passed on his rapid journey, the regular train following at a respectful distance, and at a pace which brought us into Moscow at noon to-day, after a journey of nearly twenty-five hours.

I must confess that, on first entering, the modern and suburban appearance of the holy city disappointed me; but a visit to the Kremlin and its neighbourhood, which I was not long in paying, restored and even strengthened all my foregone conclusions. I shall take a future opportunity of paying a more lengthened visit, and writing a more careful account of this extraordinary quarter; but I could not resist the temptation of at once taking a glimpse at a place which from infancy I had been hearing and reading about as one of the wonders of the world. Accordingly, I hurried off, plunged into the labyrinths of the old city, where I was nearly devoured by the worthy denizens, citizens of this Eastern Petticoat Lane, and soon found myself in the centre of the "Beautiful Place," which certainly has a very fair claim to that appellation. The sound of hammers attracted me to the still-unfinished triumphal arch by which the Emperor is to enter the sacred precincts, and suddenly I found myself in presence of the great bell, which has been so accurately

weighed, measured, and described over and over again. It is, in truth, a tremendous casting, and if in sounding order would make a most sonorous report. The broken piece lies close beside it, and more than anything else enables one to form a just conception of the enormous size of the bell itself. Passing under the "Sacred Gate," like a good Christian, hat in hand, I in a moment stood at the very grille of the Church of the Assumption, in which the great ceremonial is to take place. It has been closed some days to the public, but a good-natured deacon took pity on my curiosity, and politely invited me into the interior. What a scene of barbaric magnificence, historic reminiscence, and political suggestiveness! Passing through a darkened vestibule, I suddenly felt myself almost dazzled by a perfect blaze of gold and colour. The walls were every inch covered with frescoes and mosaics, in heavy gilt frames, and the great central pillars that support the cupolas decorated in a similar manner. Although the church is small, the loftiness of the ceiling gives it a most imposing appearance, and the vague indistinctness with which the comparative gloom enables you to take in the details, produces in the mind a peculiar feeling of awe and reverence. As works of art, few would be bold enough to defend these elaborate decorations, but they are the signs of a sentiment, a power, and a policy, and, looked upon in that light, must always be objects of deep interest to the spectator. Greek priests were chanting their vespers in one corner, while carpenters were hammering away in another at the gorgeous estrade upon which the Emperor is to kneel while he reads his rather lengthy confession of faith. Everything was resplendent with gold, and velvet, and ostrich feathers; but a glance was all I was permitted to take, sufficient to convince me that the interior of the church will not accommodate more than about 500 persons.

LETTER VII.

(NOT BEFORE PUBLISHED.)

MOSCOW.—ITS HOTELS ; THEIR COMPANY.—MONSIEUR CHOLLET.

Moscow, *August 23.*

ONE of the greatest bugbears with persons about to visit Russia is the reputation of its hotels, which every traveller, from Clarke down to Custine, have represented as everything but what Englishmen associate with the idea of comfort or cleanliness. I must confess that I myself had some misgivings as I travelled northward, and often pictured to myself as I lay cosily huddled up in the Neva's nice little berth how I should feel on the wooden tressel, which I had been informed was the only accommodation to be found in a Russian hotel. Indeed, I sometimes regretted that I had not made a small investment in domestic tinware, fearing that the means of cooking the indispensable coffee might be wanting in the country I was about to visit. The illusion was completely dispelled in as far as St. Petersburg was concerned from the moment I set foot in Miss Benson's English boarding-house, an establishment which I can cordially recommend to all future visitors to Russia. It is situated on the English Quay, directly opposite the spot at which the Stettin boat lands its passengers, and having been for many years the residence of the late Sir James Wylie, physician to the Emperor Nicholas, is supplied with conveniences and comforts which are not often found in continental houses. The two obliging hostesses are English ladies, for many years resident in Russia, speak the Russ and other continental languages with as much fluency as their own, and devote themselves entirely to the comfort and accommodation of their guests. Their house is constantly full of English and Americans, and I

never heard of an instance in which a traveller went away dissatisfied either with the fare or the charges. I consider myself in duty bound to say this good word for two countrywomen who are thus honourably sustaining the character of their native land for cleanliness and order in a strange and distant region.

But, then, I had yet to face Moscow—Moscow, the ancient capital of the Czars,—Moscow of the primitive Mujiks,—Moscow, where the people lived in sheepskins and cared little for any other domicile. Strange stories came wafted down the rail about the discomforts of the holy city, the terrific character of the cookery, the scarcity of the beds, and the ferocity of certain aborigines with whom you had nightly to dispute the right of possession. So far went one of the travellers, who proverbially “tell strange stories,” as to describe circumstantially the ingenious methods by which he himself had endeavoured to circumvent these little tormentors, who were, he said, unceasing in their assaults on the stranger’s couch. According to his story, he purchased a certain powder, which was sovereign in such cases, with which he nightly drew a line of circumvallation round his bed, and for two nights had a mischievous pleasure in watching the enemy coming up in platoons to the edge of the magic circle, but retiring precipitately the moment they smelt the deadly drug. On the third, however, what was his horror to see one little Cossack, more agile or more sagacious than the rest, clear his vaunted entrenchment at a bound, when, lo ! the “whole camp, pioneers and all,” followed, and our friend had nothing left to do but gather his blanket about his head, after the manner of Cæsar, and submit with resignation to his fate. This was hardly a pleasant prospect for a rather stout Britannic islander, who might expect, as a stranger, to fall in for a more than ordinary share of their polite attentions ; but my alarm was perfectly needless, for I certainly never was more comfortably lodged out of England than in the Dom Patrikief, Grande Lubianka, of

which Monsieur Chollet is the worthy and respectable proprietor. Monsieur Chollet himself is one of those individuals whom one constantly meets with on the Continent, who have all their lives knocked about in so many countries as almost to forget the corner in which they were originally raised. I often speculate on the land of M. Chollet's birth, but as often finish in a haze. He is strong and squarely built like an Englishman, and has that peculiar trim neatness of appearance which seems unattainable by the natives of any other country. He makes his appearance punctually at half-past seven every morning, shaved until his blue chin shines again, his linen spotless as the snow, and his general wardrobe as correct as if he was going on a deputation to the Lord Mayor. We are generally first made aware of his august presence by the loud tones of a Russian oration which he matutinally addresses to his numerous Mujik domestics, male and female, and which has the effect of setting them flying about the house something after the manner of the ship's cat immediately before a storm, and of keeping them in a state of feverish activity for the rest of the day. I believe that this morning harangue does not arise out of any immediate cause for censure, but is merely a sort of preliminary flourish intended, like the opening bars of a polka, just to shake out the limbs of the dancers. Having disposed of this indispensable preliminary, M. Chollet smoothes his imperial brow, and, as his worthy guests come down stairs, makes tender inquiries after their several healths in their several languages. The Germans accept him as an exile from fatherland, the Italians melt into tears at the soft accents of his lingua Toscana, and even the English and Americans are sometimes startled at the natural effect with which he gives out his "Too be sure." Indeed M. Chollet goes so far sometimes as to be critical on the distinctions between John and Jonathan, and has more than once hinted to me his opinion that the American language is a sadly deteriorated dialect. But M. Chollet was once

courier to an English nobleman, and he still retains an affectionate remembrance of the old country and its peculiarities, especially of the rumpsteaks that were to be had in his time, “in the leetle street behind the Bank.” As a question of arithmetic, he prefers his English guests, then the Americans, then the French and Italians, and lastly the Germans, although the last-named form the majority of his customers, the German merchants engrossing almost the whole of the inland trade of Russia.

For my own part, the impression made upon me by the mixed company with whom I every day sit down to dinner is, that if there be one thing in this world more absurd than another, it is that national prejudice that so much interferes with the free intercourse of the different peoples in it. We have here American gentlemen of wealth and refinement, who are travelling over the world in search of information and amusement, whose polished manners and liberal and comprehensive views would do honour to the first circles in any country. I have had many discussions with them on the all-important slavery question, and the result to which they have brought me is, that the best thing we can do with that ugly social knot is to leave the untying of it to the Americans themselves ; as we may depend upon this, that although every intelligent native of that country wishes to see the question set at rest, they will not tolerate any external interference. One of them had come all the way from Boston to submit to Prince Gortschakoff a plan for raising the Russian fleet now slumbering at the bottom of Sebastopol harbour, and he convinced me that he could do it too, if the delays of Russian routine did not exhaust the remainder of his natural life. I must here observe that the Russians have a wonderful opinion of the activity and energy of the Americans, although the affair of the Moscow “Remonte” makes them rather cautious in making bargains with them.

My next neighbour at the dinner-table every day is an Italian who fought for his country's freedom under

Garibaldi, who got safely to England under an amnesty, but was subsequently caught by the Austrians when attempting to pay a visit to a beloved sister. For this slight offence this unfortunate gentleman suffered for eighteen months the horrors of an Austrian dungeon, was more than once taken out to be shot, and the tortures he suffered, and which he can most eloquently describe, fully corroborate the narrative of Felice Orsini. Indeed, it is only necessary to look at him, to see that he must have been exposed to more than ordinary trials. Although quite a young man, under thirty, and of a well-favoured and expressive countenance, the traces of his past privations and miseries may be seen indelibly impressed in every feature, and are silent witnesses to the truth of his touching narrative, at the details of which no one could be more indignant than the Russian guests, who never lose an opportunity of expressing their hatred and contempt for Austria. On my other hand sits a genuine Russ, a merchant of the first guild, and a most sensible, intelligent man. He sometimes complains bitterly of England—"Russia's oldest friend"—for originating the war, and, as he says, dragging France unwillingly into it, and over and over again assures me that henceforth France is to occupy the first place in the Russian heart. But his deportment completely belies his assertions, for he is one of the friendliest old fellows I ever met, and never loses an opportunity or spares any trouble in giving or getting for me the information of which I stand so much in need.

Then we have a German gentleman, the representative of a great mercantile house in England, as fine a fellow as one need wish to know, a man fit for anything that requires strength, courage, or intelligence. Every year it is his custom, the moment the frost sets in, to don his furs, mount his sledge, and, plunging fearlessly into the wild steppe, never to draw bridle until he arrives at far Irkutsk, on the confines of Tartary, 3000 versts from Moscow, there to deal with the wild hordes of the desert

for the articles of his costly trade. He has the whole internal condition of Russia at his fingers' ends, its trade, its commercial laws, and the manners and customs of its people. Of the first, his estimate would have been astounding to me, had I not had previously some few opportunities of judging of the immense physical resources of this great empire. To its possible future development he would not put any limit, and only regrets that the absurd laws of the country throw so many ridiculous obstacles in the way of foreign merchants. The laws, as he describes them, render the recovery of debts almost as hopeless as the termination of a chancery suit in England, but this is, in some measure, compensated by the general probity of the native dealers, to which he bears honourable testimony. It is no uncommon thing, he informs me, for dealers to come to the great fair of Nishni Novgorod, from the remotest parts of the empire, and buy from him and other merchants to the value of thousands of roubles, for which payment is to be made at the next great fair. This, in the case of men who come to the fair clad in sheepskins, and with huge caps of the black Astracan lambskin on their heads, speaks well for the natural honesty of the Russian character when uncontaminated by frequent contact with the corruptions of courts and cities. Should I never again have the pleasure of meeting my pleasant German friend, I shall always retain a lively recollection of his frank, manly deportment, and most intelligent and instructive conversation.

Lastly, we had three Irishmen, two rich, and the third by no means too heavily encumbered with the precious metals, but all jolly enough, and getting on very well with their neighbours, as Irishmen generally do in foreign lands. Now, to return to my text, here we are, men of many lands and various degrees, both of station and intellect, a perfect Babel in tongues, but a temple of friendship in mutual deportment, while the distinctions of country and race had disappeared almost on the first day. I verily believe that all these distinctions are only

a slight crust after all, and that, in the main, the same conditions of life being given, mankind are pretty nearly the same all over the world.

One word more as to our high priest, from whom, I confess, I shall part with reluctance. At the head of our prandial congress of the nations sits daily the illustrious Chollet, dressed with still more precision than in the morning, although he has been actively employed from early dawn until five minutes before dinner in marketing, getting passports, receiving customers, despatching ditto, haranguing Mujiks, and superintending the cuisine; for his wife, whom he finds time to treat with the tenderest solicitude, is, poor woman, an invalid, still staggering under the shock inflicted some two years since by the death of an only and much-loved daughter. M. Chollet bears his loss like a man, but an unbidden tear often glistens in his eye as he tells the sad tale to account for Madame's small share in the domestic duties. How Chollet managed matters, especially dinner, was and is always a mystery to me, and more than anything else causes me to reverence the man. Nobody ever saw a cook, nobody ever could guess where the kitchen stood, nobody ever detected the faintest anticipatory odour of dinner, until the very moment of projection. We are all like the amiable Prince at the table of the White Cat, and sit down every day round a spotless tablecloth, which in a moment is covered with smoking and savoury dishes. Nobody ever saw them come in, but there they are as if by magic. The only sign of previous preparation we can see is a momentary flash of exertion on the part of our worthy host over a huge salad-bowl that stands on a side-table, and into which he is wont to make one or two herculean plunges with a wooden spoon and fork just before we commence. Perhaps this chosen vessel has the qualities of Herr Dobbler's portfolio, and in addition to the salad, which is always excellent, also furnishes forth the soup, the *rôti*, and the beef, of which, thanks to the Emperor's edict restricting the price, we have always a

plentiful supply. But wherever the cheer comes from, it is always good, cleanly served, and plentiful; and it is quite a picture to see Monsieur Chollet serving it out to his guests, and all the time keeping up a pleasant conversation in four or five different languages, run rapidly one into the other, like the dissolving view at the precise moment when the Rialto is subsiding into the Lakes of Killarney, so that it requires a nice ear to detect where the one ends and the other begins. Honour, prosperity, full house, and long, well-paid accounts ever attend thee, friend Chollet, Dom Patrikief, Grande Lubianka, Moscow.

LETTER VIII.

SKETCH OF MOSCOW.—THE BOYARDS.—THE PARADE OF THE GUARDS.

Moscow, *August 26.*

As the day of his Imperial Majesty's public entry more nearly approaches, the appearance of this extraordinary city becomes more and more gay, more and more peculiar, more and more unlike at once what I had hitherto seen in other great continental cities, and what I had anticipated would be its own appearance. I had looked forward to some huge relic of former and more barbarous times, with tumble-down half Asiatic-looking houses, and half Asiatic populations—in short, to a city from which the glory had departed, and which waited only the slow but certain touch of time to become for the curious traveller another Tadmor or Palmyra. What then must have been my surprise to find myself all at once set down in a capital gay as Paris, populous as London, and having features of its own which give it great and peculiar interest. Whatever I may have

thought or said in favour of St. Petersburg as the scene of the coronation, a sight of Moscow has completely changed my opinion.

The city of Peter the Great is, in truth, on the grandest scale ; but it is all grand, and there is nothing upon which to rest the eye as it ranges from one colossal palace to another. One feels, in passing along its interminable streets, or crossing its prairie-like squares, something like what must have been Gulliver's sensations in the capital of Brobdingnag, namely, a mortifying conviction of one's own littleness, and of the immense want of proportion between the huge architectural shell and its insignificant human kernel. You think of the hall of Eblis as you gaze on the solemn grandeur of the Izaak church, and long to come to the humble habitations of common men. But in Moscow, with its glorious undulating site, its long irregular streets of handsome villas, interspersed with greenery, its handsome *magasins*, and its constant rattle of equipages, you feel as if surrounded by human interest, and cease to wonder why neither despotic power, nor long neglect, nor systematic preference for a rival, can wean the true Russian from his love for the ancient cradle of his race. And now it looks brighter and gayer than ever. Paint, and lime, and varnish, have done wonders, making even the old Chinese town look sprightly and modern ; while the gilder has given to the thousand domes, minarets, and spires of Moscow a splendour and refulgence which can only be appreciated by being seen.

Stand on the esplanade of the Kremlin, and having first curiously examined its battlemented walls, its ancient treasury, its grotesque church—the Assumption—so soon to be the scene of a solemn rite, its gay modern palace, and its thousand and one quaint details ; watch for a moment the people, high and low, military and civil, as they reverentially doff their hats while passing under the sacred gate ; and then turn suddenly towards the vast city that spreads itself out beneath your feet, count its

innumerable church spires of delicate green, bright golden, or royal red ; look down its long streets, alive with human ants ; learn to distinguish its fortress-like convents, its regal palaces, its great public institutes, and you must indeed admit that you are gazing on a panorama to which the civilised world can offer but few parallels.

We can tell that the Boyards are pouring into town by the number of extraordinary-looking old equipages that throng the streets in every direction. I saw one to-day that would astonish Long Acre, drawn by a train of four wild-looking Cossack horses, and laden with a large consignment of the loyal *noblesse* of rural Russia. Even the mujiks stopped to look at it, and the *cochers* of the handsome modern landaus, as they flew past, passed jokes which must have been pungent, from the irritation they created in the rustic Jehu. But not only the Boyards come to pay their respects to their Czar. The streets are literally crowded with wild Cosaques, handsome Georgians, pale Circassians, fierce Kirgkisiens, foppish Persians—all come to see the sight, and pay the regulated homage to their sovereign lord. One is never tired looking and asking questions, but that the answers are always satisfactory would be, perhaps, a rash assertion.

The Emperor has not as yet arrived at his little roadside palace of Petrovski, but he is momentarily expected, and everything is ready for his reception. Close to the palace is a triumphal arch, from whence the procession is to start, and from that to the Kremlin is a distance of five versts, a tolerably long route for a great and solemn procession. The road on both sides is thickly studded with galleries, exceedingly well constructed, for seats in which the prices vary from ten to fifty roubles. But the fact is that, by a curious monetary revolution, the rouble has completely taken the place of the kopeck in the estimation of every one who has anything to sell, and will soon, I fear, be seen only in the cabinets of the curious, if swallowed up at the rate at which it has

is appeared during the last few days. If you want a mujik to go a message into the next street, he demands two roubles for the job, and five for drotschki fare, as he could not possibly think of walking in weather such as we are now blessed with, and the same system pervades everything with which the visitors have anything to do.

Lord Granville is comfortably located in his splendid palace, formerly the residence of Prince Graziano, and the street in which it is situated is a scene of constant bustle. There is a splendid suite of rooms, elegantly furnished, and capable of accommodating, according to the London system of cramming, two thousand persons ; but the Russians must have room for their mazourkas, their cracoviennes, and their sit-down suppers, and therefore it is probable that the invitations for his lordship's grand ball will not exceed six hundred. I believe his lordship's object will be to please by the good taste and quality of his entertainments, rather than to vie with the Russian nobility in that lavish expenditure which to them would be no novelty. Whatever is done at the embassy will, I am sure, be well done, and will fully sustain the reputation which his lordship has already acquired in this ancient capital. Both he and his suite are everywhere treated with the greatest attention and respect, and are unanimous in their testimony to the kindness and hospitality of their reception.

Yesterday evening his lordship rode over to the camp, and was fortunate in witnessing a grand parade, for which the whole of the Guards, about sixty thousand, were turned out. They are all fine tall men, and go through their evolutions with great certainty and precision. They march well, but the length of the step takes from their tread that peculiar weight of sound, so to speak, with which our own Guards have made every Englishman's ear familiar. The officers were most polite and attentive to all the spectators, and frequently asked them what they thought of the troops. Just praise was of course given, but some learned civilians grew quite

critical in their comments on the Russian column as compared with the English line. The manœuvring, which lasted a couple of hours, consisted chiefly of rapidly moving these great columns from one part of the field to another, with an occasional fusillade as they came into position. One of the officers told me that when the Emperor arrived, the whole army, upwards of one hundred thousand men, would most probably be startled some morning by the *rappel*, and put through all the evolutions of a sham fight, without any previous notice or preparation. This, while it will test the efficiency and readiness of the troops, will be a splendid spectacle for all who may be so fortunate as to be on the *qui vive*.

From the Champ de Mars to the field on which the great "Festin" of the people is to be held is but a step, and three miles of tables are already to be seen, flanked by the fountains from which wine and "quass" and "vodka" are to flow during the festival. I ventured to express my fears that such an unlimited supply of strong drinks might create riot and disorder, but was comforted with a hint that care would be taken in the preparation of the tempting fluids to prevent much disturbance of mujik equilibrium. Still I am afraid that if Mr. Henry suddenly appeared here from Bow-street on the following morning he would find ample employment in inflicting the five shilling penalty.

Another feature of the programme, for which a grand success is expected, is the "Spectacle gala" at the theatre—a new one, and I believe one of the largest in the world. Its predecessor was burned down some three years since, and the present, which is quite finished, has been only eighteen months in course of erection. I should strongly advise Mr. Gye to get a drawing of it before he rebuilds Covent Garden, as it is decidedly the handsomest and best proportioned I have ever seen. Although of twenty-five feet more diameter than the San Carlos, it appears to be of moderate extent; and the decorations, while costly, are of the best taste and design.

The architect, the Chevalier Albert Cavo, is a Venetian, long in the service of the Czar as chief theatrical architect; and to a compatriot, Signor Duzi, the preparation of the scenery is entrusted. He has completed a beautiful drop-scene, delineating an episode in Russian history, in which a peasant and a soldier roused the people of Moscow to a successful resistance to the then all-powerful Poles. It is a fine work, and will no doubt look splendid when properly placed in a well-lighted theatre. The artistes, five hundred in number, arrived last night by special train, and were reduced to great straits for sleeping accommodation. The *petit* Lablache was, I am informed, so fortunate as to secure three camp-stools and a sofa cushion, with which he extemporised a luxurious couch. As a matter of course they will all settle down soon into comfortable quarters; but a sudden irruption of five hundred tired choristers and coryphées was enough to put any hotel-keeper to his wit's end.

Sir Robert and Lady Emily Peel, Lord Ward, and a large party, are all off to Nishni Novgorod, to the great fair, where I fear their accommodation will not be much better than that which on the night of their arrival here so much startled the Italian invaders.

LETTER IX.

THE EMPEROR'S PUBLIC ENTRY INTO MOSCOW.

—♦—
Moscow, August 29.

I WRITE in the strong hope that long before this letter has reached you, your readers will have been informed, through the medium of my telegraphic despatch, transmitted on the day of the public entry, that that great event has at length taken place. It may appear strange, but it is nevertheless true, that until the official *Gazette*

appeared this morning it was quite uncertain whether the ceremonial would take place or not, it being generally understood that, should the weather prove unfavourable, the Emperor would wait for a finer day. In the morning the sky was gloomy, dark clouds hovered over the holy city, and at about 8 o'clock the rain commenced, and for two hours continued to pour down with vexatious pertinacity. The sight-seekers, the officials, and the general public suffered a protracted agony, but at last the pluvial deities relented, the clouds broke freely, the bright sun shone dazzlingly on green cupola and golden spire, and everything was joy, expectation, and excitement. An immense crowd was naturally expected, and accordingly everyone was afoot for his or her trysting place at a very early hour. Those who had taken seats on the line at five, ten, or twenty roubles each, were determined to be in time, and might be seen at eight or nine o'clock in the morning scrambling up the galleries, each furnished with at least nine hours' rations, carefully made up in baskets or handkerchiefs. You might have fancied you were walking down one of the main avenues of London on a coronation day, so similar in the main features were the arrangements, so perfectly alike the deportment of the public. There were the young ladies in their gay toilettes and bouquets, the old ones looking fierce in the conventional mother-in-law turban, the family men, and the young men, all grouping, and pushing, and talking, and arranging, just as you might see them doing on a similar occasion in Whitehall or the Strand.

The mujiks—after the manner of mujiks everywhere—had taken possession of the streets, at least of so much of them as the soldiers would permit, and might be seen at every opening, densely packed, and the front rows bent almost double, and looking exceedingly apoplectic, over the ropes which had been placed across from house to house to keep them within their proper limits. Down the principal street, the Tvertskoi, a broad central space, carefully sanded, was rigorously kept by a double line of

soldiers, composed partly of the Grenadiers of the Guard, and partly of the Ishmaeloffski Regiment, formed three deep, and marshalled by their officers in brilliant uniforms. They were all superb infantry, and looked both fierce and splendid in their dark green uniforms with scarlet facings, those being the prevailing colours in the Russian foot regiments. I walked down between the lines in company with a Russian officer, and was much gratified to observe with what gentleness and good humour the military performed the duty of restraining the mob. The joking was immense between the opposing forces, and the soldiers were not always victorious, especially when attacked by a column of bright-eyed young damsels, who in most cases played off their traditional artillery with entire success against the grim sons of Mars. The street is not straight in its line nor uniform in the size of its houses, like Regent-street or the Nevskoi, but winds gracefully over an undulating surface, while every house has a strong individuality, both in size, design, and decoration. They were all decorated in bright colours, and filled in every window and balcony with well-dressed people, and I must say that notwithstanding the irregularity of the buildings, I never saw a finer or more picturesque effect produced. The crowd was very great, and extended with more or less of density all the way to the Palace of Petrovski, a distance of seven versts, or about five English miles, from the city ; so that there could not have been much less than half a million of people assembled to welcome their Czar in the ancient capital of his empire. If you consider the distance from which many of the spectators must have come, and the inadequate means of transit existing in the rural districts of Russia you may consider the numbers as quite on a par with any of the great gatherings in London.

All the temporary galleries, for which large admission fees had been paid, were densely filled, and even up to the last moment, the roubles were flying about in all directions for the purchase of seats. I had myself

taken an early opportunity of securing one in an advantageous position, but was subsequently so fortunate as to obtain, through the courtesy of Baron Bode, *Maître de la Cour*, a billet for the interior of the Kremlin, with privilege of circulation not only within the military lines, but through all the courts of the fortress itself, including even the sacred quadrangle in which the church of the Assumption stands, and which, according to the programme, was to be devoted exclusively to the accommodation of the *haute noblesse*. Armed with the Baron's potent firman, I passed along the serried ranks of grim-looking warriors with perfect impunity, and when I had exhausted my curiosity by an inspection on the level, I ascended the battlements of the keep, and subsequently, the clock-tower of a little church, which seemed as if built into the wall, and was enabled to survey at my leisure, with the aid of an excellent glass, the whole of the brilliant and unique panorama, that stretched itself out on every side beneath my feet.

I have already expatiated on the extraordinary and singular beauty of Moscow, as seen from any elevated position. One is never tired gazing on its gay variety of gold, and red, and green, as displayed in the cupolas and spires of its innumerable churches. Turn one way, and you are reminded of the Alhambra; another, and you imagine you are in a Chinese city; but the third dispels the illusion, as you find yourself gazing on buildings as modern and elegant as those of Paris or Vienna. To-day being a gala-day, and, moreover, a fine day, they appeared to greater advantage, resembling more the whimsical combinations of the kaleidoscope than any ordinary brick and mortar accumulation. We had to wait a long time for the entrance of the cortége, but had ample amusement meanwhile, in watching the movements of the crowd, scanning with curious eye the Turkey carpets, Persian silks, and even Russian bear-skins, with which the balconies were decorated, or distinguishing the various squadrons of cavalry that

shot past like meteors, *en route* to their respective stations.

Who are those splendid cavaliers in bright cuirasses over white uniforms, and mounted on superb black chargers, that prance, and curvet, and sidle, and rear, to the great inconvenience of the crowd, but the manifest admiration of the ladies? They are the *garde à cheval*, one of the picked regiments of the immense Russian army. They are making for Petrovski, to form part of the Emperor's body-guard. Who are those steady, sober-looking fellows in light blue uniforms, mounted on steady business-like horses, and looking as if Sir Richard Mayne might place himself at their head at a moment's notice? They are the mounted gendarmerie, a most efficient body of men, who keep the peace of this great city, with its half-European, half-Asiatic population, in a way that would do honour to the London police. They are followed by an elfin troop, the grim-looking Cossacks of the Ukraine, mounted on hardy little horses, and helping the gendarmes to look after the people, while the gendarmes look after themselves. They are odd, suspicious-looking fellows these, and when one meets a couple of them in a dark night with their long lances, their black sheepskin shakos, exaggerated by the darkness, their Hayreddin Maugrabin air, and their furtive glances, one remembers with a sigh the prosaic A 29, with his glazed hat, snug surtout, and exceedingly re-assuring bull's eye lantern. We are next attracted by an army in miniature, and the ladies, in evident delight, exclaim, "The Junker Cadets!" as the brave little fellows, with a great air of dignity and responsibility, take their places close to the walls of the Kremlin. Then we admire the gay hussars, or martial lancers, or laugh at the *grenadiers du palais*, as they box the ears of the intrusive little boys, after the most approved London fashion. Finally, we all eat our luncheons, cultivate digestion, and patiently wait the hour of arrival.

Three o'clock! The magic number booms from the

great clock of the Assumption ; the distant roar of the cannon at Petrovski comes rolling on the ear ; it is answered by the guns, and immediately the vigorous beattles of five hundred churches commence ding dong with bells great and small, sonorous and shrill, gong-like and cymbal-like, until the tympanum is bewildered, and one imagines that nothing less than the approaching end of the world can have created such a clangour. Every eye is now strained, as aides-de-camp gallop past, soldiers fall into line, and priests in golden vestments emerge from their churches, and wait in their several vestibules the coming of the Czar. We had not long to wait, for soon the head of the grand procession bursts upon the view, and never in the grandest theatre spectacle was there seen a more gorgeous parade. First came the Lesghians of the Caucasus, covered from head to foot with bright chain armour, mounted on prancing Georgian horses, and looking as they rode past, lance in rest, and battle-axe in hand, like veritable knights of the crusades. Close behind followed the pale, slim Circassians, in their white caftans and splendid turbans, and mounted on black horses as slim and graceful as themselves.

Then we had the Persians of the district of Erivan, in conical black caps, as you may have seen them some night in the Speaker's gallery of the House of Commons, their little graceful figures glittering in the gold brocades of Shiraz and Teheran. They are the dandies, the veritable "swells" of the procession, and seem to have a sufficient consciousness of that interesting fact. A Tartar group follows in flowing robes of green velvet, embroidered in gold, and managing their mettlesome steeds as Tartars only can manage them. Lastly come the Mingrelians, in red tunics and strange little caps, compared to which a blue-coat boy's would be a sombrero ; and the avant-garde closes with strong squadrons of Cossacks of the line, and of the Ukraine. Following this most gallant and striking pageant came the representatives of the *haute noblesse*, splendidly dressed, and mounted on

horses of immense price. Plumes waved in every direction, the trumpets sounded a fanfare, and these princes of the land, whose every name has its history, passed slowly on to the sacred gate. As you have long since had the programme, I shall not trouble you in detail about the *Laquais*, the *Negres de la Cour*, the *Piqueurs* or *Veneurs*, and the running footmen, the latter, by the way, proceeding at the most leisurely pace possible.

All eyes were now fixed on the Emperor, who, dressed in a general's uniform, and mounted on a magnificent grey charger, rode slowly into view. As he made his appearance the cheers were deafening, and when he stopped before the little church opposite the Kremlin, took off his golden casque, and piously received the benedictions of the priests, the popular enthusiasm knew no bounds. His imperial Majesty looked well, though grave, sat his horse with grace and dignity, and frequently acknowledged the salutations of the people. Close behind followed his staff, a perfect army of generals and field-officers in the most varied and brilliant uniforms that can be imagined, and then in a long line the splendid gilt carriages of which I have already forwarded you a description. The first contained the Empress Mother, who was much cheered, and next followed that of the Imperatrice Regnante and the Czarovitch, being the beautifully carved antique English chariot, to which I have before alluded. These two were respectively drawn by eight horses, while the remainder, containing the dames d'honneur and officers of the court, had only six.

The Empress wore the *kakochnik*, or national Russian head-dress, studded all over with diamonds, and her robe was a splendid compromise between the ancient Slavonic tunic and the modern French toilette. Upon the tremendous springs that curled up in front of these two carriages, sat court pages in splendid dresses, their faces being turned towards the carriage. The effect was exceedingly good, and the young gentlemen got a very

large share of the public approbation. Attending upon the carriages of the two Empresses were strong squadrons of the Chevalier Gardes, the most magnificent cavalry in the world,—the horses of the private soldiers being quite equal in beauty and spirit to those of the officers. They certainly looked and rode splendidly ; and, as soldiers of *parade*, nothing could be finer. It took a long time to pass all these great personages and great carriages through the gate ; and it also took some time to descend, by an interminable and narrow flight of steps cut in the battlemented wall, for those who had spent the morning on the ramparts. When I arrived at the quadrangle in which the Cathedral of the Assumption stands, the Emperor had already entered the church, the priests were chanting the *Te Deum*, and his Majesty performing the prescribed solemn rites of the Greek Church. He remained but a very few minutes, when a cortége was formed, and proceeded across the quadrangle to the churches of St. Michael the Archangel, and of the Annunciation, where the sacred reliques were presented by the Emperor's confessor to his Majesty to kiss ; and his Majesty stopped for a moment to offer a prayer over the tombs of his ancestors.

The Metropolitan wore vestments of golden tissue, the same as the priests, the only difference of costume being a peculiar head-dress,—the distinguishing mark, I presume, of his high office. The whole ceremonial was exceedingly brief ; and at its conclusion, the whole court ascended by a broad flight of steps, covered with scarlet cloth, into the Palace of the Kremlin, where, of course, the pageant terminated,—in as far, at least, as the public were concerned. I observed with pain that the Empress mother, as she ascended the steps, was supported on both sides, and seemed to suffer much from weakness and exhaustion. In the evening, the Kremlin was partially illuminated, and flambeaux were arranged along some of the streets ; but it was merely a rehearsal preparatory to the great illumination which is to follow the coronation.

The Senate and the Arsenal looked exceedingly well, and attracted crowds of people, both in carriages and on foot, through which a small *coupé* dashed at a rapid pace, and on its approach to the strong light, disclosed to the delighted Russians the pleased features of their Emperor and Empress, who had thus come out in the most unpretending and confiding way, and entirely without escort, to witness the sight, as well as the rest of the people. It would be impossible to speak too strongly of the admirable order of the arrangements, the civility and good-humour of the soldiery, or the general deportment of the people.

I subjoin, as a sort of curiosity in its way, the telegraphic message, by which the above letter was anticipated by above a week. It is one of the first instances in which the telegraphic wire was used in conveying intelligence from the heart of the Russian empire to a London newspaper. Although being of considerable length, and having to be transferred five times on its journey, it was received in London in about twenty-four hours from the time of dispatch.

(BY ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH.)

Moscow, *August 29.*

THE morning of the day fixed upon for the solemn entry of the Emperor into Moscow was ushered in by louring clouds and rain. About mid-day, however, the sun broke through, and the afternoon has been bright, and calculated to show off the gorgeous procession to advantage.

A little after mid-day a salvo of nine guns from a battery posted opposite the Tchoudow Convent, followed by a peal of bells from the Cathedral of the Assumption, gave the signal to all the bells of Moscow to begin jangling. Their deafening clang has continued ever since, and only those who have witnessed can imagine the noise and vibration of the air produced by such a mass of tintinnabulary metal. As soon as the hurricane of

clangour broke out, actors and spectators of all ranks and degrees hurried to their posts.

At 3½ p.m. the Imperial procession left the Petrovsky Palace. First came a "Maître de Police," with twelve mounted gend'armes to clear the way. The Emperor was preceded by his body-guard in their magnificent uniforms, squadrons of Cossacks of the Black Sea, and of the regiment of Guards, the representatives of the *haute noblesse* on horseback, all in uniform ; the representatives of the Asiatic populations which acknowledge the sovereignty of Russia ; with valets, lacqueys, and runners of the court. After this mixture of European and Oriental costumes, came Masters of Ceremonies and others, with their badges of office. After this train, in which European and Oriental finery were strangely mingled, came Alexander Nicolaievitch, on horseback, attended by the Minister of his Household, the Minister of War, and his aides-de-camp. The Princes of the blood followed, all on horseback. A long train of splendid carriages next came in order, containing the Empress, the Empress Mother, the Grand Duchesses, and the Princess of Oldenburg, followed by their ladies of honour. Squadrons of Cuirassiers closed the procession.

At 4 p.m. precisely, a salvo of seventy-one guns announced that the Emperor was entering his ancient capital. The Military Governor-General of Moscow received his Majesty at the entrance of the city, at the head of his *employés*. The magistrates and the burghers received his Majesty at the entrance of the quarter called Zemlenoi Gorod. The Marshal, and the nobility of the government of Moscow, received him at the entrance of the quarter called Bieloi-Gorod. The Civil Governor, and the civil authorities of the city, were stationed to receive him at the gate of the Resurrection. Here a brief halt took place, during which the Emperor, the Empresses, and the Princes and Princesses of the blood, dismounted, and knelt before the image of Our Lady of

Iberia. This ceremony over, the procession again moved onward ; was received at the gate of the Saviour by the Commandant of Moscow and his staff ; and, in front of the Cathedral of the Assumption, by the Directing Senate. All along the route of the procession the houses were decorated, and the clergy stationed at the gates of their respective churches, with their images and crosses. The acclamations of the assembled multitudes were enthusiastic, and distinctly heard above the din and clangour of the bells.

The Emperor, the Empresses, the Princes, and the Princesses, descended from their horses and carriages in front of the Cathedral of the Assumption, at the stair which is called Krasnoé Kryltzo. Intelligence of this event was forthwith thundered forth by a salvo of eighty-five guns. The portion of the Imperial *cortége* which preceded their Majesties kept on their way round the cathedral, and such as had the *entrée* entered it by the north gate. The officers of the court completed the circle of the building, and stationed themselves in front of the south gate, to await the coming out of their Majesties. The Holy Synod, and the functionaries of the cathedral, met their Majesties at the *parvis*, and preceded them into the church, chanting the second canticle for Palm-week. After kissing the images and relics, their Majesties proceeded to the cathedrals of the Archangel Michael and the Annunciation, in both of which the ceremony of kissing the images and relics was gone through. In the cathedral of St. Michael they also prostrated themselves before the tombs of his Majesty's ancestors.

On quitting the cathedrals, their Majesties, accompanied by the court, walked to the Palace of the Kremlin. At its gate they were received by the court clergy, with the cross and holy water. The Archbishop of Moscow here presented the Emperor with bread and salt ; and immediately afterwards a salvo of 101 guns announced, at 5 p.m., that the Imperial family had entered the palace of their ancestors.

The metallic hurricane from the innumerable churches still vibrates through the air and shakes the walls. At night the city is to be illuminated.

LETTER X.

REVIEW OF TROOPS.—RAILWAYS IN RUSSIA.—PERFORMANCE AT THE GRAND OPERA.

Moscow, *Monday, Sept. 1.*

THE moment the public entry and the subsequent banquet at the Kremlin Palace had been disposed of, the imperial family, fatigued with the parade of state, retired to a villa of Count Sherametioff (the great Russian millionaire, and owner of 300,000 serfs), situated about thirty-eight versts from Moscow, whence his Imperial Majesty comes occasionally to the camp to inspect the troops. On Saturday last he had all the cavalry out in detachments of three from each regiment,—namely, an officer, a sergeant, and a private, and each trio went successively through the exercises. In the case of the regular cavalry, the practice was like that of the other European services, and exceedingly good ; but the wild, irregular Asian squadrons excited great interest by their peculiar motions and wonderful dexterity. The mailed Lesghians flung away their battleaxes and picked them up again at full speed ; the little Cossacks charged with their long lances with extraordinary precision ; and the Circassians managed their beautiful horses in a way that would have done honour to Astley's or Franconi's. The appearance of the troops is certainly magnificent, they being all picked men, and splendidly mounted. One regiment of the Gardes-à-cheval mount all chestnut, another all black, another dapple-grey, and, with their white uniforms, burnished cuirasses, and helmets, they almost dazzle one in the sun-

shine. The most elaborate care seems to be taken of their toilettes. When drawn up in squadron or line, an officer may be seen going round, followed by a sergeant, brush in hand, and minutely scanning the uniform of each soldier for a crease or a stain. The moment he discovers one he calls the sergeant, who commences smoothing and brushing, and finishes by combing out the horse-hair that adorns each helmet. The horses prance and curvet according to the most approved principles of the *haute école*, while the ladies clap their hands in admiration, and juvenile mujiks scream with delight.

The horses themselves seem to enjoy the sport, and neigh in chorus with a depth of intonation which sober English troopers would in vain attempt to imitate. In short, military pageantry seems to be the great delight of all classes in this country. To-day, to-morrow, and Wednesday, there are to be grand reviews, but, as to-morrow is to be the grandest, I defer my visit to the camp until then, my hands being quite full of other matters. The town is very full both of Russians and strangers, but it is expected that the week following the coronation will end in a general clearance, as even the most gorgeous spectacles pall by constant repetition.

Pending the coronation fêtes, the great fair of Nishni Novogorod has been going on in full activity. I should, perhaps, have visited it, being only two days' journey from Moscow, but that I learnt there was great difficulty and delay in getting horses for the return journey. However, I am informed by visitors, who had been tempted to take the trip by the glowing descriptions of the handbooks, that it is an exceedingly prosaic affair, and the inconvenience to which strangers are exposed beyond description. In that choice locality the famous Russian bug flourishes in full vigour and ferocity, sucking well conditioned Englishmen to the bone, while the eating and living accommodations are of the most primitive character. As to the picturesque variety of Asiatic costumes, it is all

moonshine, the Tartars being the universal middlemen for the Chinese, Persian, and Indian trades, and offering no novelty to any one who has been in St. Petersburg or Moscow. The principal articles of traffic are Siberian iron and manufactured metal from Tula, which are exchanged for caravan tea and Chinese and Persian silks. I understand that, like all other great fairs, the Nishni begins to exhibit symptoms of decline, modern commerce finding more rapid and frequently recurring means of carrying on its transactions. It is possible, however, that when the railway from Moscow is finished, the more modern Novogorod, like its kindred holy city, may experience a revival. This year's fair has, I believe, been below the average.

Apropos des bottes, I may mention that the coronation has attracted to St. Petersburg and Moscow an immense contingent of railway speculators and contractors from England, America, France, and Belgium, all anxious to ascertain the intentions of the Imperial Government with respect to the construction of great arterial lines.

The great line from Moscow to Warsaw is in course of construction under the auspices of the government, and another equally gigantic undertaking, the Moscow and Odessa line, is under consideration. The point of uncertainty is, I believe, not whether it shall be made, as that is determined on, but whether it shall be a government work or be conceded to a company. I understand that Mr. Edwin Clarke, an English engineer, has received instructions to have plans and estimates producible in February next (the same instructions being, I suppose, given to other competitors), when a final answer will be given. The general opinion here, in all well-informed quarters, is, first, that railways in this country will be expensive in construction, from the immense cost of the transport of material, the boggy character of much of the terrain, and other local obstacles which I need not more particularly allude to ; secondly, it is feared that although ultimately sure to be productive, they must for a long time exist

only on a government guarantee, and that, pending the growth of traffic, such guarantee will be a heavy drag on the imperial revenues. At present the population is sparsely scattered over an immense extent of territory, and would therefore offer but a small contingent of passengers, the approved and settle basis of railway dividends. However, on the other hand, I may myself observe that the cost of goods transit is at present so great, as to make dead-weight almost as expensive as passengers. The only present means of internal transit is by the rudely-constructed *telega*, by bullocks and by water carriage; so that, if the price of corn in St. Petersburg be six roubles the chetwert, three of them go for carriage from the place of production to the port of shipment. It is said that fifteen kopecks would be an amply remunerative railway-toll. It is the same with wood for fuel, an article only next to bread in importance here, since five-sixths of the price, which is enormous, go for cost of bringing it to market. Besides, it is impossible to say what stimulus might not be given to passenger-traffic, by the presence of novel facilities. Thirdly, it is universally conceded that the railroad system in Russia must spread itself out between Moscow and the Black Sea, as in that direction lie all the fertile land, all the great manufacturing towns, and much of the most active and intelligent population. The probability is that the Russian government—should it entertain any comprehensive scheme of railway communication—will, in the first instance, take military exigency into consideration, a thing, however, not much to be regretted, as military exigency fortunately jumps with the theory above laid down, and it is almost certain that military railroads, in spite of the first intention, will soon be turned to better and more legitimate uses. I need not tell you the important part the Volga fills in the internal transit of Russia, and that that river must be carefully considered by any one who sets about constructing a railway map of the country. But let no one rush into railway speculation, as regards this part of

the world, in the hope of bringing these schemes to a speedy maturity. The imperial government has been rendered exceedingly timid and suspicious of foreign contractors by the American contract for the "Remonte" of the Moscow—a transaction of which they speak in terms that are certainly more explicit than complimentary.

As a proof of this caution, I can cite the Emperor's own words, uttered only yesterday during a presentation. It is usual with his Majesty when strangers are presented to ask them "Whether this is their first visit to Russia, and what has attracted them?" On the occasion to which I allude, the question was put to a Belgian, who promptly answered that he came with a view to the establishment of railways. "Ah!" said the Emperor, "we want railways, but we must wait two or three years yet." The same question was subsequently put by the Empress to the same individual, and, on receiving the same answer, her Majesty said, "Yes, we want railways much; but I fear the country is too large for us to think of them." The above observations, on the authenticity of which you may rely, go far to show that there is no disposition to undue haste in railway matters existing in high places. Before parting with this not very "graphic," but still rather important topic, and descending from principles to details, I find it impossible to get any exact information respecting the Dunaburg and Riga line, a matter of some interest to English speculators. I understand that whatever difficulty exists arose in this way. The capital was first fixed at twenty million silver roubles, upon which the government guaranteed four per cent. Subsequently, the contractors reduced the estimate to sixteen millions, holding out to the shareholders the hope of getting five instead of four per cent., on the presumption that the Russian Government would hold to the gross guarantee; but to this the latter demurred, and hence the delay. The last report is, that the matter has been finally settled by the contractors accepting the reduced guarantee.

So much for the railway coronation visitors and their projects. Returning to my more legitimate department, I shall conclude my letter with a detailed programme of the remaining coronation "business," which I have just obtained from a reliable Russian source ;—20th, 21st, 22nd (Greek time), reviews ; 23rd, 24th, 25th, proclamation ; 26th, coronation, illumination, and for following two days ; 27th, 28th, 29th, congratulations from various public bodies, including the Russian lord mayors ; 30th, grand procession to church ; evening, spectacle gala at the theatre.

Then follows a long list of balls, imperial and ambassadorial, until the 12th of September ; open-air fête to the people ; then more dinners and balls down to the 18th, when all will finish with the *feux d'artifice*.

Monday Night.

I have just returned from the Grand Opera, which was opened for the first time this evening with Bosio, Lablache, Calzolari, and other London favourites. The appearance of this magnificent theatre when lighted up and filled with a brilliant audience fully realised the expectations expressed in a former letter. It has five rows of boxes, with twenty-eight boxes in each row, and to each loge there is a retiring room as large as many a London drawing-room. The pit is all divided into comfortable stalls, and in no case are more tickets issued than the house will conveniently accommodate, a hint that might be taken with great advantage by the managers of our London houses. What with the elaborate gold scroll-work, raised on a ground-work of delicate green, the richly carved pillars and pilasters, the scarlet velvet lining of the boxes, and the exquisitely painted drop scene, the interior of the imperial theatre presented a *coup d'œil* such as one could hardly have expected at a distance of 2000 miles from London. But when I add that the audience was mainly composed of officers in

gorgeous uniforms, and ladies in grand toilette, you can easily imagine how surpassing must have been the general effect. It only wanted the presence of the Emperor and Empress, whose box is a little palace in itself, to make the picture complete. The embassies of the great powers were well represented, the French filling one box on the grand tier, and the English another. Amongst the latter I recognised Lady Emily Peel, Lord Ward, Messrs. Fane and Currie, &c. The two ambassadors were also present, Lord Granville in a box, and Lord Wodehouse in a pit-stall. They left early, there being, I believe, a ball at the embassy. The opera was "Puritani," in which Bosio's singing so delighted the Russians that she was called several times before the curtain. Lablache looked stupendous, and rivalled the Greek priests in the depths of his intonation, and the rest of the performers acquitted themselves respectably. There were no encores, an admirable practice; and when the opera was over, the audience could go home without suffering the purgatory of an interminable ballet. The performance of the orchestra of 150 performers was worthy of all praise.

I have just room to mention that Mr. William Gladstone and some other English civilians were presented yesterday.

LETTER XI.

THE PARADE OF THE TROOPS.—THE RECEPTION AT THE KREMLIN.
—THE PROCLAMATION.

Moscow, *Thursday, Sept. 4.*

BESIDES being everywhere at the same time, like Sir Boyle Roche's bird, a special correspondent, writing in Moscow at the present moment, would require a most extraordinary amount of application to keep his narrative

abreast of the actual events, so rapidly do they succeed each other, and so difficult is it to obtain information as to their whereabouts and times of occurring. However, I must do the best I can, which will be to describe what has taken place since my last under separate heads, as it has occurred in very widely separated localities.

THE PARADE OF THE TROOPS.

Early in the week the camp at Petrovski was one day suddenly disturbed by a general call to arms, with the important additional information that the Emperor and imperial family were coming in person to the inspection. A grand tent was immediately prepared, the imperial standard was run up at head-quarters, and for a whole morning there was nothing to be seen everywhere but polishing, pipe-claying, and grooming the horses. The *rappel* came rolling in from every side; dense masses of infantry and brilliant squadrons of cavalry might be seen hurrying to their different allotted stations, while the grim artillery lumbered heavily along, exciting general admiration by the beauty of the horses and the completeness of the appointments. The infantry dotted the vast evolution field in heavy columns, the favourite position of the Russian army, and right and left were the cavalry and artillery, the former being distinguished by the large stature of the men, the superiority of the horses, and the great splendour and variety of their uniform.

But the most attractive and picturesque of the horse soldiers were the Asiatics, who rather grouped than formed in large numbers over various parts of the ground. There were the mailed Lesghians, the white-robed Circassians, the savage Koord, the lithe little Cossack, and (the latest edition) the "Battalion of Balaclava," all Greeks, and dressed in the beautiful costume of the Albanians. The day was exceedingly fine, and there was ample opportunity for taking in the whole of the imposing spectacle at a glance—grey infantry, brilliant, glistening

cavalry, and many-coloured and savage-looking Asiatics. So large is the field that, although there were perhaps 120,000 men on the ground, the force appeared to be of moderate dimensions, and it was not until they began to defile that their real numbers could be appreciated.

The Emperor, Empress, Grand Dukes, and a brilliant suite came on the ground a little before twelve o'clock, and were shortly afterwards followed by the embassies, Count de Morny on horseback, and Lord Granville in his state carriage. The Imperial family alighted at the tent prepared for them, and directly after the Emperor and Grand Dukes mounted their horses, the latter placing themselves in first-rate military style at the heads of their respective regiments. They are fine boys, ride well, and are great favourites with the soldiers. With such a force, anything like lengthened or complicated evolutions was out of the question during the space of time the Emperor could afford before dinner, and therefore the whole business of the day consisted of "marching past," an operation that took fully three hours in the performance. The infantry, including the whole of the foot-guards, marched at ordinary time, and there was ample opportunity for critically observing their appearance. They are tall, most of them strong and martial-looking, but still there are a great many young recruits, the terrible typhus having on the frontiers of Poland carried off upwards of 15,000 of the veterans. There is one regiment, first formed by the Emperor Paul, that still wears the conical cap and gaiters of the time, and it is said that the men are all carefully selected, with noses the reverse of Roman, it being considered that a sort of massive pug suits best with the peakless shako of the olden time. Whether from chance or selection, I can vouch for the fact that the noses are terrific, and that being so, they harmonise wonderfully with the antiquated head-gear. So anxious are the military authorities that this rather singular-looking regiment should preserve its original characteristics, that the modern helmets are in many

cases perforated as if by musket bullets, in imitation of the original ones which had been so marked in the old time.

Of the splendour of the cavalry I have more than once spoken, and of course they never looked better than on this grand gala day, when they were assembled to do honour to the coronation of their Emperor. The parade terminated with a grand charge, in which upwards of 12,000 dragoons made the ground tremble under their horses' hoofs, and a whole cloud of the picturesque eastern irregulars darted, wheeled, checked, dismounted, shook their spears, and mounted again in less time than it has taken me to write down the fact. The agility of these men is surprising. At one time, bent down to the saddle-bow, they seem to swoop like eagles; at another they check their horses in mid career, jump from their saddles, let their horses go, and in a minute they are up again, riding, clinging, and some standing on the croup, bolt upright; their long caftans streaming in the wind, and the flashing sword or bright battle-axe flourishing about their heads.

As a last manœuvre, the regular cavalry formed in great squadrons, galloped furiously up to the spot where the Emperor sat on horseback, surrounded by a brilliant staff, and then, suddenly checking their horses, they drew their sabres, waved them round their heads, and shouted with one voice, "Zdrova Jeliem"—"I wish you health, Czar"—as they passed off again like a whirlwind. The effect of this was peculiarly fine, as the Russian language, although looking rather strange on paper, is sweet and musical to the ear, while the men have nearly all deep and powerful voices. The sound of the first salute burst suddenly upon the ear, then seemed to diminish as if carried away with the departing squadron, and anon was taken up by its successors, until the whole of 12,000 of the finest cavalry in the world had thus in this fine soldierly style saluted their Emperor. The whole proceedings did not terminate until half-past three o'clock, when tents were struck, and the Emperor and Empress, surrounded by a splendid cavalcade, returned to town.

THE RECEPTION AT THE KREMLIN PALACE.

On Tuesday the Empress and Empress Mother did the honours at the Kremlin Palace, the Emperor being in religious retirement as a preliminary to his solemn coronation. The palace itself, which is one of the great sights of Moscow, has been for some weeks closed against the curious, and it was not until the reception took place that the strangers had an opportunity of seeing its magnificent interior. On first entering, you find a truly imperial staircase of Parian, and porphyry, and jasper, and malachite, leading to the grand suite of saloons in which state festivals and receptions are held. First, there is the hall of St. George, in white and gold, where the famous soldiers of the empire dine on great occasions, and where each general has his niche adorned with his name and those of his ancestors who have deserved well of their country. This is a sort of earthly Walhalla, to obtain a seat in which is almost a military immortality. Then there are the halls of St. Andrew and St. Vladimir, in which the chapters of the respective orders are held, and the decorations of which are fanciful arrangements of the insignia of the orders in gold and gems, and lapis lazuli, producing an effect which words would in vain attempt to realise. The eye literally ached under the glitter: and when, having passed through the state bedroom of Catherine the Great, we found ourselves in the old-fashioned concert-room, surrounded by half naked mujiks scrubbing the parqueterie floor with brushes on their feet, after the manner of the Parisian frotteurs, the sensation was positively one of relief.

The concert-room is low and antiquated, and the little orchestra in the corner would hardly accommodate even a modern ophecleide. From the modern palace of the Emperor to the ancient one of the Czars is but a step; but what pages of Russian history are written on the interval! The interiors of the Terema and Granovitaya Palata resemble more than anything else the casemates

of a fortress. But the walls are whimsically and elaborately decorated, and the subdued light, struggling in through small windows of stained glass, discloses in every corner some shrine or picture sacred to Russian piety. It is to the coronation-hall in the Granovitaya Palata the Emperor will repair after the coronation, and dine surrounded by the very cream of his nobility. Those who had the good fortune to see Queen Victoria supping in the crypt at Guildhall may form a very good idea of the arrangements of the Emperor's coronation banquet. All is already prepared, the ancient historical plate is arranged ; but for the present everything is sealed up, and only to be seen with the greatest difficulty.

The reception took place in the large palace, and was attended by many of the English visitors, to all of whom the two Empresses were most affable. To Sir Robert Peel, the Empress Mother said, " Ah, you are the son of my Lord Peel ;" and to Mr. William Gladstone, " Yours is a well-known name in Russia." The carriages of the various embassies made a grand display, the most noticeable being the French, English, and that of the Prince de Ligne. It was generally admitted that the English equipage surpassed all others in substantial grandeur, and Lord Granville's horses and footmen were generally admired ; the latter perhaps as having calves to their legs, an appendage in which the French " Jeames " is singularly deficient. There was a considerable crowd about the entrance, but they were very orderly and quiet, as compared with an English mob. The poor mujik is certainly one of the most docile animals in the world. His elysium is the top of a well-heated stove to sleep on, and his nectar the " Tschai," which willing hands are always brewing here for the proprietors of loose kopecks.

THE PROCLAMATION.

This morning (Thursday), people were hurrying from all quarters to the Kremlin, to hear the proclamation,

the details of which you have had long since in the published programme. It was quite impossible to get into the Kremlin, where the first proclamation was made, so narrow are the various gates, and so much were they blocked up with carriages ; but the cavalcade was seen to great advantage emerging from the sacred gate—generals, heralds, and soldiers all simultaneously making reverence to the holy picture overhead. The generals wore splendid uniforms, and were covered with orders ; the heralds had as many colours in their tabards as we see in England, and the led horses champed and foamed in the hands of the grooms who led them unwilling through the gate. The whole procession drew up close to the bronze group of Prince Pojarsky and Minin, in the centre of the “Beautiful Place,” and the herald read, like a Russian stentor, the following brief proclamation :—

“Our very august, very high, and very powerful Lord, the Emperor Alexander Nicolaiévitch, having ascended the hereditary throne of his ancestors, that of all the Russias, together with those of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Finland, which are inseparable from it, has deigned to order that the coronation of his Imperial Majesty, and his consecration, shall take place on the 26th day of the month of August ; and that his august spouse, the Empress Marie Alexandrovna, shall participate in that holy ceremony. This solemn act is announced by the present proclamation to all his faithful subjects, in order that on that happy day they may redouble the fervour of their prayers to the King of Kings to diffuse by His Almighty will, His favours and blessings over the reign of his Majesty : and that pending its duration, He may maintain peace and tranquillity, to the glory of His holy name, and for the unalterable prosperity of the Empire.”

The moment the herald had read the proclamation, he commenced throwing lithographed copies of it in the Russian language, amongst the people ; and from a mujik, who by superior strength and agility had possessed

himself of a whole sheaf of them, I purchased the copy which I enclose.

The crowd was very great, and the mounted gend'armes had some difficulty in keeping the necessary space clear, but all was quiet and orderly, as I have invariably observed to be the case since my arrival in Russia. The ceremony will be repeated to-morrow and on Saturday, the herald stopping and reading the proclamation at all the most public places in the city. The anxiety to witness the coronation hourly increases. As for the cathedral itself, it contains seats for only 480 persons; and as there are about 5000 who have a recognised right to be there, it is quite out of the question that any strangers will get admission. But the quadrangle in which the church stands has been surrounded with handsome galleries, and for seats in one of these the price to-day is 100 silver roubles. It is a perquisite of the church, I believe, and will therefore, I suppose, as is the case in other lands, be made the most of.

English visitors continue to pour in, one of the latest arrivals being Captain Percival Robbins, Q.M., who is attached to Lord Granville's suite, and who has been to London and back since my arrival in Russia.

LETTER XII.

THE CROWNING OF THE EMPEROR.

Moscow, *Sept. 8.*

To enable the English reader to understand the outline which it shall be my endeavour to give of the august ceremonial of yesterday, it will be necessary in the first instance to sketch slightly the different, although contiguous, localities in which the various portions of the imperial programme were carried out. Far within the battlemented walls of the Kremlin, and surrounded by large public buildings, such as the Senate and the Arsenal, is a rather

contracted court, three sides of which are mainly occupied by the Uspenski Sabor, or Church of the Assumption, the churches of the Archangel Michael and of the Annunciation, and the old and new Kremlin Palaces. The fourth opens upon an extensive esplanade, which in its turn commands the Moskwa river, and beyond it one of the finest urban panoramas that can possibly be imagined. Were it not that it would be a mistake in art to distract the attention from the great central point of view—the coronation itself—whole columns might be written about the innumerable gilded spires, grotesque cupolas, and palatial mansions that may be taken in from this spot at a glance, scattered as they are in rich profusion on the further bank of the modest river that gives its name to the ancient capital of Russia. But our business is with the important events connected with the coronation itself, and all raptures concerning magnificent prospects must be reserved for some future occasion.

The coronation, as all the world knows, takes place in the Church of the Assumption, and about this the reader must learn something before he can follow the elaborate ceremonial of which it was yesterday the scene. According to our notion of churches, the interior of the Uspenski Sabor is small indeed, scarcely accommodating 500 persons ; but still its great height and deep intersecting arches give it a most imposing appearance, while the Byzantine pictures and gilding with which its walls are entirely covered, and the costly shrines and monuments which it contains, subdue the mind by the sheer force of their material splendour, and leave one puzzled as to whether he ought to smile at their barbaric taste, or reverently bow to their mystic symbolism. Two or three thousand pictures of saints and heroes stud the walls so closely that no interstice can be detected between their heavily gilded frames, and, from the centre of the dim lantern which forms the sole means of illumination, a colossal half-length of the Saviour looks down benignantly on His, at all events, sincerely reverent worshippers

below. The roof is supported by four immense pillars, wholly out of proportion to the dimensions of the church, covered from top to bottom with the frescoed traditions of the Greek church, lapped, as it were, in a gilded scroll continuously round the circumference. Within these four pillars stood the costly estrade upon which the ceremonial took place, and upon the decoration of which all the art, taste, and resources of the empire had been lavished. Crimson velvet, gold brocade, gems of immense value, gold and silver furniture, including the ancient throne of the Czar, contributed to swell the magnificence of this small enclosure ; and over head hung a gorgeous canopy, plumed with white ostrich feathers, and suspended by numerous gold and silver cords from the lofty ceiling. A heavily gilt and massive balustrade surrounded this estrade, within which no one was to enter but the Emperor and Empress, the Empress-Mother, the Metropolitan of Moscow, and, at one moment, the ladies of honour who were to arrange the small crown on the head of the Empress. On one side was a gallery covered with scarlet cloth for the diplomatic body ; on the other a similar one for the ladies of the great ecclesiastical dignitaries of the empire ; and at the back of the throne a third, for the *haute noblesse*, and such official notabilities as had the privilege of the *entrée*.

With the church the Kremlin Palace communicates, exteriorly, by a grand flight of steps, and if you add a broad platform, extending from the base of the point of junction, and making a long sweep to include the exterior esplanade, and thus give the people an opportunity of "assisting" at the coronation of their sovereign, you will be able to form a tolerably correct idea of the site covered by the ceremonial of which I am about to attempt some imperfect details. I should add that, for the purposes of the coronation, the fourth side of the court had been filled by a temporary wooden screen, handsomely draped, and pierced with two lofty gateways, through one of which the imperial procession emerged at

the termination of the coronation, and by the other of which it returned *en route* to the Kremlin Palace. In this court were the galleries for the *élite* of the spectators, the admission to which was by tickets, the price of which varied according to proximity from twenty-five to fifty, and for one gallery even one hundred roubles. Six o'clock in the morning was an early hour to be afoot, for people exhausted by previous spectacles, but at any later hour the chance of admission was exceedingly problematical ; and even then each entrance-gate of the Kremlin was a scene of the most extraordinary confusion, in consequence of a rule of which nobody had before heard, refusing admission to all except those who came in carriages and pairs. I who had, with immense trouble, procured a most unpretending drotschky, had a regular pugilistic encounter with the Budishnik before I got through, and to this moment do not know whether I may not be the defendant in an action for assault, battery, and forcible entrance.

Once within, however, the scene was most exciting. There were crowds of well-dressed people, groups of mujiks, and pelotons of cavalry, mixed up in the most admired confusion. On every side drums were beating, colours flying, and trumpets braying the various notes of command peculiar to the Russian service. The whole of the esplanade seemed paved with parasols, above which here and there fluttered the banner of some guild, whose privilege it was to get thus near the grand ceremonial, and whose organisation and costume reminded me strongly of an Odd Fellows' procession in England. Here and there also the wiry little Cossack, mounted on his equally wiry little horse, wound in and out through the crowd, keeping order as best he could, and constantly exchanging sentences, obviously not taken from Chesterfield, with the spectators whom he disturbed. For this outer space sixty thousand tickets had been issued, and if you add twenty thousand more, who either evaded, or forced, or bribed their way in, you will come pretty near the actual

number of civilians who were spectators of the coronation procession. As for the military of all branches of the service, and gendarmes, I make no attempt to count or classify them, but they stood everywhere in close masses, and might have formed a very respectable army in themselves.

In the inner court the crowd was much less, the price of tickets seeming to have had rather a cooling effect on public curiosity ; but still there was a large number of fashionably dressed people in the galleries, and the flagged centre was filled with a heterogeneous mixture of ladies, gentlemen, *gardes à cheval* and *à pied*, Cossacks, Tcherkesses, Koords, negroes, priests, and military bands. On the platform which I have before mentioned, none were permitted to walk but persons in uniform ; and here I recognised Mr. William Gladstone, Mr. Bankes (son to the late member for Dorsetshire,) and his young brother, (an officer of the *St. Jean D'Acre*,) with two or three other Englishmen, who, in virtue of their yeomanry, or militia habiliments, had been permitted thus to mingle with the Russian *militaires*, and to emulate them in fierceness of strut, and brusqueness of soldierly demeanour.

At seven o'clock a salute of twenty-one guns from the walls of the Kremlin announced that the great business of the day was about to begin, and the officials threw open that gate of the church by which public functionaries and ambassadors were to enter. The sweepers and dusters had just given the interior the last finishing touch, and a reverend father might be seen hurrying to the corner in which is placed the silver coffin of (I believe) *St. Philip*, of which he was for that day to be the guardian. His reverence took his seat on the steps, but every moment had to rise and lift the ponderous silver lid, as a smartly-dressed official, or fierce-looking general, came to bend low before the shrine, or devoutly kiss the effigy of the departed saint. The holy father was most polite and communicative to strangers, but as he spoke in Russ, while they spoke English, you may imagine the additions

made by the interlocutors to their respective stores of information. One little incident in this sacred corner was strongly illustrative of the spirit of tolerance that honourably distinguishes the Greek church. While the Russians only approached the shrine in the most humble and obsequious manner, barely venturing to touch the velvet-covered steps with their foreheads, a stranger was politely requested to sit thereon, and nobody seemed to take notice of the incongruity. But I must not linger, for there is still much to be told.

The privileged visitors began now to drop in, and one of the first was the Princess of Mingrelia, who has recently arrived in Moscow by imperial invitation, and who is one of the reigning *lionnes* of the place. Her highness, who is a remarkably fine woman, of about thirty years of age, was gorgeously dressed in gold brocade, with a broad blue sash, on the shoulder-knot of which she wore the Order of St. Katherine in diamonds, conferred on her for her distinguished feats of arms when Omer Pacha ravaged her mountain kingdom, and on her head a splendid coronet of emeralds and rubies. She was accompanied by her son, the reigning prince, a fine little boy eight years old, dressed as an aide-de-camp of the Emperor, an honour which had been conferred on his little highness only the previous day. Hearing that some "special correspondents" had ventured within the sacred precincts, her highness sent her interpreter to the representative of a well-known continental journal, requesting a few minutes' conversation. It is needless to add that the gentleman in question was only too ready to obey the summons, and was excessively surprised to find that her highness was fully acquainted with and duly appreciated the functions of the Fourth Estate. She told him, in excellent French, that she hoped herself and her dress would be noticed in the journal he represented, and detailed her heroic struggles against Omer Pacha, who, she said, had plundered and ravaged her little kingdom. Her highness then returning to the great question for

which the newspaper plenipotentiary had been summoned to an audience, said, with much *naïveté*, “Comment me trouvez vous ?” The gentleman was of course *ebloui*, and the interview terminated with a pressing invitation for self and friends to the château in the Caucase, if they ever should happen to pass in that direction.

The church now began to fill. Lord and Lady Granville, accompanied by the Marchioness of Stafford and Lady Emily Peel, were amongst the first arrivals ; Lord Wodehouse, accompanied by Mr. Julian Fane, came shortly after, and the doorway was soon completely filled by the French Embassy in brilliant uniforms ; and, mingled with them, were Sir Robert Peel, and one or two other English faces. The Count de Morny took the right ; next to him Lord Granville ; then Prince Esterhazy ; and lastly, the Prince de Ligne ; the other ambassadors getting seats as best they could, without any order of precedence. Immediately behind Lord Granville, sat Lord Wodehouse and Mr. Fane ; and on the same and hinder benches, the ladies of the several Embassies. By this time forty Bishops of the Empire had assembled between the estrade and the shrine of the Virgin, and, assisted by their attendant priests, were invoking Heaven in favour of the Emperor. Nothing could be more magnificent than the robes ; nothing more venerable than the appearance of these prelates. At their head was Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, the most distinguished name in the Russian Church, distinguished for piety, for learning, and for the physical vigour that at an advanced period of life enables him to continue in the active discharge of his episcopal duties. The golden shrine of the Virgin lay open, containing her portrait,—said to be painted by St. Luke, and studded with jewels of immense size and value. Wax tapers were burning ; incense was rising in clouds ; choristers and priests were chaunting most heavenly music ; when the hum of the people without, and the roar of artillery, announced an imperial arrival. It was the Empress Mother ; who, although broken down

with ill-health and sorrow, had come thousands of miles to assist at the coronation of her son.

Nothing can be more touching or creditable to the Russian people than the affection and respect which they always exhibit towards this illustrious lady ; and never was it more conspicuous than on the day of the coronation, when, both within and without the church, she was almost overwhelmed with demonstrations of attachment. Her Majesty, who was accompanied by a brilliant cortége, immediately took her seat on the throne allotted to her on the estrade.

There was now a slight stir at the side-door. It was the Turkish envoys asking admittance. They were obliged, however, to go to a gallery specially prepared for them outside ; as the rules of the Greek Church do not permit the entrance of any one who cannot kneel before the true cross. Another salvo of artillery, another chorus of almost divine harmony from the choristers, and the Emperor and Empress arrived at the grand grille of the church. His imperial Majesty wore a general's uniform, and marched under a magnificent canopy supported by sixteen Majors General, the ends being held by sixteen Lieutenants General. The Metropolitans of Moscow and Novogorod proceeded to the gate to welcome his Majesty,—the first to bestow a blessing, and the second to sprinkle the imperial pair with holy water. They were followed by a gorgeously-attired cortége, amid which might be recognised the Panins, Dolgourokis, Gortchakoffs, and other names familiar to the students of Russian history. The gallant defender of Sebastopol looked as well, and nearly as young, as when, four years since, he stood over the open grave of the Duke of Wellington, in St. Paul's Cathedral. Then there were the Asiatic tributary princes, in their magnificent costume ; and, finally, the generals who had the right to occupy so distinguished a position. At the entrance, the Emperor kissed the cross, and, subsequently, the hand of the prelate, who tendered it with the palm upwards,—

the mode in which this salutation is performed in the Greek Church. The Empress was followed by a fair bevy of maids of honour, in Parisian versions of the Russian national costume. They looked most captivating in their kakochniks ; but the fairest of the fair was the young Princess Sherematieff, the granddaughter of a serf. The Emperor and Empress, having duly made reverence at the sanctuary and before the sacred images, now slowly ascended the estrade, and the ceremonial of the coronation commenced. For the circumstantial details, I must refer you to the programme which has already been published, confining myself to the more remarkable incidents of the day.*

The imperial pair being seated on the ancient thrones of the Czars, the regalia was properly arranged, and another burst of divine harmony came from the choir. The Metropolitan then presented a profession of faith, which his imperial Majesty must read, and which he did read on this occasion with due emphasis and discretion. The document, which was exceedingly lengthy, took upwards of ten minutes in the reading, during which the most profound silence reigned in the church. Immediately after, the Emperor was invested with the state mantle ; and here followed the most interesting feature in the day's proceedings. Taking from the Metropolitan the crown—an immense one, blazing all over with diamonds—his Majesty, with his own hands, placed it on his head : thereby intimating that from no earthly power, priestly or lay, did he receive his sovereignty.* Then, making a sign to the Empress, who knelt submissively before him on a golden cushion, he just touched her forehead with it, and immediately replaced it on his own head. This was a moment of intense interest. The imperial children clustered round the august pair, and all rules of etiquette were forgotten in the affection of the paternal embrace. The Empress Mother, who had borne up with immense fortitude, burst into tears, as she, in turn, advanced to congratulate her son ; and the whole of the congregation,

* See Appendix p. 166.

as they fell on their knees in honour of the rite, sobbed and cried in sympathy, like children.

What a history did not that tear of the Empress Mother recall ! More than a quarter of a century before she had received a similar honour from the greatest sovereign of his time ; had for years after shared his thoughts, his joys, and his sorrows ; had been the gentle spirit that softened the iron firmness of his character ; and now she stood alone,—the great man had passed away, and to other hands was about to be confided the powerful sceptre which it had been so long her happiness to share in wielding. This was the culminating point of the ceremonial. Then came the recital of the Emperor's titles ; the anointing ; the administration of the Sacrament—to the Emperor in both forms, the Empress in one ; the Mass, and other ceremonials purely religious ; and, finally, the congratulations, which the Emperor received with great dignity and self-possession. At the same time his countenance wore a careworn and saddened look, and he seemed like one who felt oppressed with the sense of an awful responsibility. Now came the moment for which 70,000 people outside had been waiting with exemplary patience. A gorgeous procession issued from the church door. In front was a splendid canopy, under which walked the Emperor, with the imperial crown upon his head, and wearing the imperial mantle. A step or two behind, followed the Empress, wearing the small crown, which, in the church, had been attached to her head-dress by one of the ladies of honour. There were the standard, the seal, and the sword of the empire, the great functionaries at a respectful distance behind, and the dismounted gardes à cheval, in their golden cuirasses, lining the way. From a hundred bands pealed out at once the national anthem—"God save the Czar"—and the shouts of the people formed a tremendous accompaniment to the music. The countenance of his Majesty was most solemn ; he bowed repeatedly, but never smiled, and the cheers seemed to die away for want of the

imperial sympathy. It was a strikingly oriental spectacle : the pagoda-like canopy ; the great Czar, with his immense crown of diamonds blazing in the sun ; the many oriental costumes, and the bearded mujiks, all formed a picture which I shall not soon forget, but which I feel I have but weakly attempted to preserve for the English reader.

LETTER XIII.

THE ILLUMINATIONS.

Moscow, (*same date*).

FOR no portion of the coronation ceremonial had more elaborate preparations been made than for the general illumination, a description of festive demonstration for which Moscow has peculiar advantages, from its undulating site, and the quaint grotesque forms of many of its public buildings. Artists had been sent for from Paris and Berlin, and for months before the day of the coronation every spire, steeple, and “coign of vantage” had been covered with men, whose business it was to encrust them with a wooden framework, which, while carefully following all their caprices of form, should at the same time accommodate the myriads of lamps with which it was ultimately to be furnished.

To understand the work the artists had to go through, and the difficulties they had to contend with, let us take one or two instances. At the top of “The Beautiful Place,” and close to the gate of the Saviour, stands the church of St. Basil, with its twenty domes and cupolas, all of different shapes and sizes, but all of considerable altitude. I should say that, excepting the suburban villa of a certain provincial mayor which I had once the happiness to inspect, this church is the greatest architectural

monstrosity in the world ; and not only does its form outrage the grotesque, but colour also brings in its powerful aid, and the various towers and cupolas—some like a plum-pudding, some a pepper-box, others affecting the coffee-pot configuration—are all painted and gilt like so many harlequins' jackets. Tradition attributes the erection of this church to Ivan the Terrible, who, when surfeited with the execution of his subjects, used to set about building churches in which he might pray for their souls. He employed an Italian architect, but furnished him with his own design, and between the two was St. Basil created, to puzzle, like the Martello towers at home, all posterity. So much, it is said, was the gracious Ivan pleased with the work, that when finished he, in the exuberance of his delight, ordered the eyes of the unfortunate Italian to be put out, lest he should pirate the imperial conceptions, and duplicate them in some other land. This act may perhaps have been a little stringent towards the individual, but the world has reason to be grateful if through its means it has been spared the further development of the Basilian school of ecclesiastical architecture. To me, personally, St. Basil has been since my sojourn in Moscow a beacon of hope and a harbour of refuge, for being the only church that has a distinct individuality about it, it was the only one about which I could not be mistaken, and therefore every time I lost my way, which was pretty well every time I attempted an independent promenade, my last chance, after having exhausted my Slavonic on unintelligent Isvodstchiks, was to make for St. Basil, from which I could always find my way home.

For the purpose of the illumination this extraordinary church had to be covered with a frame—I might almost say a basket-work—of wood ; and hazardous indeed has been the operation. A few days before the coronation I stopped to watch the poor mujiks poised high up in the air, and fixing the lamps on the innumerable hooks of the framework. I saw one poor fellow slung up to the

top of a high tower by a dozen men. As he rose he swung to and fro in the wind ; but when he got near the top, the men below giving a sudden pull to bring him "home," the rope broke and down he came tumbling over and over like a ball, a distance of two hundred and fifty feet. There was a shriek, a dull heavy plump, and all was over ; the poor mujik never spoke or stirred, and his companions who had done the deed scampered away in every direction, just as in London when the spirited charioteer runs down a child, he thinks only of the police, and lashes his horse more furiously than before. But the work was at last completed, and St. Basil, and the tower of Ivan Veliki, and the whole turreted wall of the Kremlin, miles in extent, and the façade of the arsenal, and the other public buildings within the *enceinte*, were in due time covered with this wooden framework, that followed every eccentricity of outline, and was studded all over with little lamps filled with tallow and having a very thick wick in the middle of each.

The wall of the Kremlin was literally festooned throughout its entire extent, every tree in the beautiful garden was covered with coloured lamps, and even the fountains had their framework of light, through which the water foamed and sparkled when the time came for bringing all their great preparations to fruition. It is easy to imagine how beautiful all this must have been when lighted up and seen through the slight mist of a hot summer's night—a mist not dense enough to obscure the lights, but still sufficiently opaque to hide the more solid material they covered.

I, of course, took a carriage—all the world, including the hosts of Pharaoh and Sennacherib, seemed to have taken to chariots—and simply enough imagined that I had nothing to do but ride round and see the sights. But I forgot that during the previous week the railway had brought 100,000 strangers into Moscow, and that all the strangers would, like myself, be in carriages on the night of the illumination. I did not imagine there were so

many old rattletraps in the world. The police had ordered that none but carriages with two horses should have circulation, and consequently the most convulsive efforts had been made to get the teams up to the regulation standard. When my "cocher" turned into the Vertscoi I found myself in a moment almost overwhelmed in a stormy ocean of vehicles of all sizes, shapes, and colours ; so thick indeed were the carriages that there was no room for foot passengers, and therefore poor mujik had to get into corners, and, as well as he could, keep out of the way of Cossack lance or gendarme's sabre. How we got along I cannot very clearly describe. Sometimes we went forward a little, then we were driven back. At one moment a Cossack would start as from a reverie, put spurs to his little horse and gallop at us full charge, no matter what stood in his way. Then he would harangue the cocher, and the cocher would make a spirited reply ; then our friend from the Ukraine would seize the reins and treat us to a gyratory motion, recklessly smashing everything that came in his way with the long pole of our carriage. At last some person of suggestive mind would whisper "kopeck," and in a moment the descendant of Ghengis Khan would soften, let go the reins, and allow us to proceed at our normal pace of three yards per hour.

Through this and a hundred similar incidents we crawled along the principal streets, having ample time to admire the Palace of the Princess Kotchubey and the hotels of the English and French ambassadors. Count de Morny's was the only illumination in the Vertscoi having coloured lamps, and the contrast with the immense masses of white light made it both conspicuous and beautiful. When we got to the Kremlin we found that all the world had wended in the same direction. There was a dead lock at every gate, and the air shook again with a very Babel of excited tongues. We had nothing for it but to descend and walk, and after an unheard-of struggle we at last got to the great scene of attraction. I have

described the preparations, you must imagine the result. Imagine all these quaint outlines brilliantly lighted up, and appearing as if suspended in the misty sky ; imagine three miles of walls, draped in sparkling festoons ; imagine, or rather realise, some enchanted garden with its fountains of diamonds, its trees covered with pearls and rubies, and its cascades of liquid gold and silver. The architectural outline of every building seemed accurately traced out with a pencil of light, and not only the outline, but every ornament that could be found on the surface. The tower of Ivan Veliki, looked like a colossal Czar arrayed in a mantle of diamonds, and with a coronet of rubies encircling his head. The odd-looking St. Basil was, by the magic influence of tallow in a state of combustion, transformed into a fairy palace, and the more modern buildings of the Kremlin were as delicately traced out in light as they might have been in the architect's plan. Across the water we looked down upon an enchanted city, and the quiet waters of the Moskwa flamed like liquid fire from the reflection of the lights. The aborigines pronounced it to be the finest illumination they had ever had in Moscow, and the travellers vowed that it completely eclipsed the great annual Roman illumination.

Next to the Kremlin, the place in which the great theatre is situated was most remarkable for the taste of the design and the beauty of the effects produced. This is an immense expanse, four times the extent of Lincoln's-inn-fields, and at one end stands the peerless theatre, with its grand Corinthian portico and its magnificent façade. On the other sides, at intervals, stand various buildings, all of which had for the present occasion been connected by a handsome screen of many arches, so that, when lighted up, the whole circuit of the square formed one complete and continuous design. Above all, and before all, stood the theatre itself, every flute in the pillars, every scroll or ornament in the capitals or entablature, being accurately traced out in living light. The illumination had made it an enchanted palace, and the

state of the atmosphere hung it, as it were, in the air, producing every moment from the thousands of spectators shouts of astonishment and delight. I myself, although not altogether unused to scenes of this description, enjoyed the luxury of a new sensation, and have not as yet recovered sufficiently from my wonder to give you more than the above loose, general impressions of the illuminations of Moscow.

LETTER XIV.

THE SPECTACLE GALA.—THE LEVEE.—LORD WODEHOUSE'S RECEPTION
BY THE EMPEROR AND EMPRESS.—MOSCOW CANARDS.

Moscow, *Sept.* 12.

LAST in the order of succession, but assuredly the first in importance and splendour amongst the festivities of the coronation week, we must place the grand spectacle gala, which took place last night (Thursday) at the Grand Opera. For this special occasion the theatre had been handed over entirely to the court, and no person could gain admission except by special invitation, or rather, speaking in court parlance, command of the Emperor. The accommodation of the house had been accurately gauged, every seat was numbered, and, finally, a corresponding number of tickets struck off for the great occasion. It was then that the troubles of masters of the ceremonies and grand chamberlains really commenced. The whole noblesse of Russia—rather a numerous body—together with all the foreign embassies, at once applied for tickets, until at last it would have required the Coliseum, with its eighty thousand seats, to satisfy all the applicants. Of course hundreds—nay, thousands, were disappointed, and even amongst the successful, abundant means of annoyance were found for the well-baited officials, in the mysteries of precedence, and the difficulty

of placing every one exactly in the place that suited his or her notion of their proper position in the scale of society. Princesses complained that they were placed below countesses, and countesses insisted that they were as good as princesses, until the masters of the ceremonies were driven almost to their wits' end.

At last, however, the list was made out at least to the satisfaction of those who obtained tickets, and the programme of the spectacle gala was issued in due form ; and truly it was a scene to witness which was well worthy a strong effort. I have more than once mentioned the vast size and exquisite proportions of this great theatre, its elegant accommodations, and gorgeous decorations. But last evening it looked more resplendent than ever. In addition to the central chandelier, each tier of boxes was illuminated with wax-lights, making the *coup d'œil* almost too brilliant for prolonged contemplation. When I entered the parterre at about half-past seven o'clock, I found it filled with officers in every variety of uniform, and all seemed lost in admiration of the splendid scene of which they themselves formed so important a feature.

To appreciate the striking splendour of the ensemble, it must be remembered that the decorations are in the most ornate renaissance style, with Byzantine reminiscences skilfully introduced by the artist, in compliment to the *genius loci*. The ground of the box cornices is the most delicate light green in the world, and upon it are encrusted all the elaborate varieties of gilt ornament that are to be found in the most florid specimens of the school. The pillars of the imperial box are Byzantine, carved, gilt, and twisted ; and behind all hang the draperies of crimson velvet which divide the boxes from their several retiring rooms. All this, seen under a powerful light, was magnificent in the extreme ; but if we fill the parterre with officers in every variety of uniform and decoration, and the boxes with ladies in superb toilettes and blazing with jewels, it will be easily seen how far short

any written description must fall of the realities of the wondrous picture.

The Emperor arrived at about half-past eight o'clock, accompanied by the Empress, the Empress-Mother, the Grand Duchess Constantine, and the Crown Prince of Russia, and immediately came to the front of the box to receive the congratulations of his affectionate subjects. His Majesty, who wore the uniform of a general of Cossacks, looked exceedingly well, as did also the Empress, who wore the national head-dress in diamonds. The *parure* of the Empress Mother was still more dazzlingly brilliant, and seemed as if it would serve for the ransom of a kingdom. The moment a slight rustle in the imperial box announced the approach of the Emperor, the whole house rose, the occupants of the parterre turning their faces to the box, and welcoming his Majesty with the most wonderful cheer I have ever heard. It must be remarked that the Russians are naturally the most musical people in the world, and instinctively harmonise every cry or acclamation ; but in addition to this, on the present occasion, there was thrown in the uniformity of military discipline, nearly the whole of the male portion of the audience being officers, and the result was, that every cheer became a mass of musical sound of the most unusual and impressive character. I do not mean to intimate that it was the result of drill or previous organisation, but rather a spontaneous harmony arising from the instinct of the people and the entire unanimity of the loyal and affectionate feeling. The Emperor bowed repeatedly, and stood, as did the entire audience, while the band played the Russian National Hymn. The Empress Mother had a separate ovation, and her mode of recognition showed how grateful was the compliment to her feelings. At a signal from the Emperor we all resumed our seats, and then had time, before the rising of the curtain, to examine the brilliant company, and notice their distribution.

As I have before mentioned, the parterre was almost

filled with officers in brilliant uniforms. There were the garde-à-cheval in white and gold, the hussars in light blue and silver, the gorgeous varieties of the Asiatic costume, and the more sober contrast of the strangers' uniforms. There were several Spanish officers in scarlet, faced with black velvet, Austrian Hulans in tight-fitting crimson dresses and magnificent pelisses of velvet and fur, while there might also be noticed a tolerably fair sprinkling of British red and blue, and these, to my taste, suffered nothing whatever from the ordeal to which they were exposed. The British naval uniform, in particular, is hardly to be surpassed in its quiet richness, and that I am not singular in that opinion may be inferred from the fact that it has been taken as a model by all the naval nations of the world. The *Rez-de-chaussée* was completely monopolised by the ladies, and amongst the Russian *belles* were many faces that would create a sensation in St. James's. The *Bel-étage* was given up almost wholly to the ambassadors, Lord Granville's box being on one side of the Emperor's, and the Count de Morny's on the other. Lord Granville was accompanied by the Countess (who has won golden opinions amongst all classes by the affability of her demeanour), the Marchioness of Stafford, and Lady Emily Peel. The two latter ladies are, I understand, exceedingly admired by the Russian officers—a proof, I must say, of decidedly good taste on the part of these gentlemen. There was Prince Esterhazy in his immortal diamond pelisse, and the Prince de Ligne, who looked as if he had hardly yet recovered the slight, real or imagined, which for the last two days has supplied the Moscow world with gossip. Count de Morny, it appears, got the order of St. Andrew, the highest of the Russian orders, while the prince was offered the White Eagle, which he indignantly refused. It is said that his wounded feelings have since received a salve in the shape of a malachite vase; but whether the gift will induce him to wear the rejected order is a problem for the solution of which a trembling world must, I believe,

wait a little longer. There was the Princess Belasinski, the greatest heiress in Russia, and beautiful as a Peri, and, "observed of all observers," the illustrious Totleben, in whose behalf strangers vied with Russians in the earnestness of their admiration. The defender of Sebastopol is a fine-looking man of about forty years of age, tall and strong, and weather-beaten, as a soldier should be. He seemed to be on intimate terms with most of the English officers, and chatted freely with all who could express themselves fluently in French. I confess that to me this wonderful man was a greater object of interest and curiosity than all the splendour I have been attempting to describe.

I had almost forgotten that there was an opera and a ballet, so much was the interest absorbed by what was passing on the audience side of the curtain. We had, however, the "Elisir D'Amore," with Lablache, as glorious as ever, in Dr. Dulcamara, and with the graceful and melodious Bosio as the heroine, adding fresh laurels to her already great Russian success. Ever since the opening of the theatre she has been called nightly before the curtain, an honour with which she was on the present occasion obliged to dispense, as etiquette does not permit of any demonstration, either of applause or disapprobation, when the Emperor is present. It seemed rather odd, this continuous silence in so crowded and brilliant an audience, but I soon got used to it, and it saved all the misery of encores. Cerito made her *début* in a military ballet, and seemed as young and as buoyant as ever; and everything was over by eleven o'clock, when the imperial family departed as unostentatiously as they had come, their equipages being very quiet carriages, each escorted by a couple of Cossacks. The other festivities and ceremonials of the week may be disposed of in a few more lines. On Monday the diplomatic bodies felicitated the Emperor, and, as usual, the British equipages were the things most admired, the American uniforms the things most stared at. Brother Jonathan, determined to

please the Emperor of Russia at any price, has invented a court dress of his own, the most remarkable feature of which is a cocked hat with a tremendous *yellow* plume, which, like the white plume at Ivry, may be distinguished afar off in every *melée*. At the levee three unfortunate individuals might be seen in this grotesque costume, and they were the object of general curiosity, if not of admiration. It was noticed that the English alone, thanks, I suppose, to the stern discipline of Sir E. Cust, were the only strangers who, on being presented, retired without turning their backs upon royalty. The Americans of course bolted, but better drill had been expected from the French, and from the representatives of the older courts. But no, everyone wheeled on the steps of the throne but the Islanders, who kept their faces to the Emperor until the intervention of a pillar enabled them to look before them without any violation of respect.

Foolish canards are flying about here respecting the reception of the English at court, and their deportment, as compared with the other embassies, and above all one of immense plumage, describing Lord Wodehouse as having been so stung in a certain Isle of Serpents, as to have declined kissing the hand of the Empress at this very levee; and as these canards may probably reach England indirectly, I may say there is not a single word of truth in them from beginning to end. The Emperor receives all the embassies with equal courtesy, and at the imperial balls the Empress walks a polonaise with each ambassador in turn, the Turkish inclusive. At the levee Lord Wodehouse had the honour of kissing hands, and even of chatting with both Emperor and Empress, and, therefore, the lovers of peace need feel no alarm, nor draw any unfavourable inference from the incidents of court ceremonial here. On Tuesday there was a court ball in the magnificent rooms of the Kremlin Palace, at which about 5000 persons were present. It was, as you may conceive, a brilliant sight, the suite of apartments being amongst the most magnificent in Europe.

On this occasion the regalia was arranged on a table in the throne-room for the inspection of the guests, and not even a single servant was placed to watch these jewels of inestimable value. They were, of course, surrounded by the curious until the signal was given for the dance, when the Emperor led out Lady Granville for a polonaise. When I talk of a polonaise at court, by the way, you really must not imagine that I mean anything like the giddy gyrations of the modern Terpsichore. The polonaise is simply a promenade to music, in which the Emperor and Empress respectively make one turn of the room, with those whom they honour with their hand, when the latter bow, and retire to make room for their successors. On this occasion Lord Granville had also the honour of dancing with the Empress. On Wednesday the officers of the army offered their felicitations ; on Thursday came the spectacle gala, with which I commenced my letter.

LETTER XV.

MOSCOW CANARDS.—LORD GRANVILLE'S HOSPITALITY.—THE SHAM FIGHT.

Moscow, *Sept.* 15.

EVERYONE who has read—and who has not ?—"The Pirate" of the author of "Waverley," will remember how that prince of jolly fellows, Magnus Troil, determined to make merry at his daughter's wedding—how he killed the fatted calf, mustered the pipers and fiddlers, and summoned all his kindred and friends from far and near for a whole month's rejoicing. But they will also recollect that even the primitive Orcadians got tired on the third day, and that many began to yawn and languish for a return to the normal state of tranquillity from which they had been so pleasantly disturbed.

Just so is it with our coronation festivities in Moscow. We began with a tremendous programme, which every one devoured in a paroxysm of voracious anticipation; we thought we could see sights, and dance, and eat grand dinners to all eternity. But now, everything is changed; the guests are hurrying away in troops, some are enjoying the luxury of acute dyspepsia, and even the Emperor himself has exhibited an unmistakeable symptom of weariness in the proclamation just issued, anticipating by five days the original date of the "festin du peuple." But, amidst all this pervading lassitude, the British ambassador keeps steadily on the even tenor of his hospitable way, and greatly dines, or merrily dances, or courteously receives, with that unflinching pluck and bottom which are the proud characteristics of his race and nation.

I think I mentioned in a former letter the anticipations of the St. Petersburg English, that at Moscow Lord Granville would overtake his French competitor in the festive race, and in the long run maintain for the "Roast Beef of Old England" its traditional supremacy; and they have not been disappointed. The Count de Morny has been distanced in the race, fairly dined and danced down, and to Lord and Lady Granville is now universally conceded the palm for dinners, for balls, for receptions, and, best of all, for unflagging graciousness and courtesy of demeanour. I do not say this in any ungenerous spirit of depreciation towards the French embassy, who have well and splendidly represented both the wealth and proverbial taste of their great country; but then the Hotel de Morny is Bachelor's Hall, while at the British embassy the wives and daughters of England offer a "material guarantee" to the wives and mothers of Russia, and, consequently, the latter find themselves as much at home there as in their own domestic circles. This, I can assure you, is no exaggeration. The provincial nobility of Russia—the great boyards of the rich and fertile south—are primitive, almost patriarchal, in

their habits ; their homes are their empires, and the warmth of affection exhibited by the different members of a family for each other is quite touching and refreshing to the English strangers. The old princesses cluster their fair daughters about them “as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wing ;” and the latter, while educated to the highest pitch of modern refinement, speaking freely “the four languages,” and being well acquainted with English literature—in which I am proud to say they take unaffected delight—dancing, singing, and playing with lady-like grace and skill, have all the freshness and modesty of deportment that foreigners so much admire in our island girls. It is not to be wondered at, then, that ladies such as I have attempted to describe find themselves emphatically “at home” with Lady Granville, and Lady Stafford, Lady Ailesbury, Lady Emily Peel, and Lady Margaret Leveson Gower—that they should grace the receptions, and go gladly and freely to the balls.

The second danse, one of the precursors of the grand ball which the Emperor is expected to honour with his presence, took place on Friday evening last, and was crowded with the Russian nobility, princes and princesses, counts and countesses, officers of the guards and the militia, and a most satisfactory display of Russian youth, beauty, and fashion. The noble host and hostess seemed quite as fresh, as merry, and as courteous as if they had not been dancing, dining, and receiving for the last three weeks or a month. They chatted with the fathers and mothers, danced with the sons and daughters, and, in short, sedulously and successfully endeavoured to make all their guests as comfortable and happy as possible. I hope I am not infringing on the etiquette of hospitality by these general allusions to the festivities at the British embassy, but there are so many silly canards flying about here, and which are eagerly collected and punctually transmitted to Western Europe, respecting our social relations with the Russian court and noblesse, that

I feel bound and justified in saying what I know to be true respecting the real state of the case. Take one or two examples: It has been generally reported here that Lord Granville and Count de Morny, when coming out here, had been respectively entrusted with minatory notes to the Russian government, respecting some political differences arising out of the treaty of peace, but that while Lord Granville had, John Bull-like, at once thrust his note into the hand of the Emperor, Count de Morny had, with better tact, reserved his, and, as a consequence, had completely monopolised the attentions of the Russian court. To give a Defoe-like *vraisemblance* to the story, it was circumstantially added that when Lord Granville called on Prince Gortchakoff, the latter was "too ill to be seen," and in ten minutes after was receiving the French ambassador. Now, I have not the privileges enjoyed by some newspaper correspondents of attending cabinet councils, or accompanying ambassadors extraordinary when they present diplomatic notes, but with respect to the first part of the above story, I think that it carries its refutation in its intrinsic and manifest absurdity. To go to the coronation of the Emperor of Russia with a letter of congratulation in one hand, and an uncivil political note in the other, would be something like attending a man's wedding and taking the favourable opportunity at the same time of serving him with a writ. Neither can I speak from personal knowledge of the politico-sanatory condition of the hero of Sebastopol on the occasion referred to, but this I do know, that he was at Lord Granville's on Friday night as jolly as possible, that he chatted with his host and hostess in the most friendly manner, and had a tremendous confabulation with Mr. Julian Fane, whom he held by the hand for ten minutes in a corner of the ball-room, while he poured into his ear some tremendously interesting story, the "authentic" details of which would make the fortune of an imaginative journalist.

From the ball-room, gemmed with wax lights and

resonant with the music of "lutes and soft recorders," to the camp and parade ground seems an abrupt transition, but thither your special correspondent must go, no matter how it rains; and—oh, ye pluvial deities!—how it did rain in Moscow yesterday morning, when the enthusiastic remnant of the British invasion were wending their way in such carriages as they could obtain, to the great Hadinka plain, where the Emperor was to review his guards and test their efficiency by the evolutions of *la petite guerre*. Our friends north of the Tweed talk exultingly of what their skies can do in wetting an Englishman to the skin, but if they had been present at the Moscow review yesterday, they would forswear umbrellas in very shame, and admit that a "Scotch mist" is Egyptian aridity as compared with a real right-down Russian rainy day. Down came the steady, pitiless, persevering deluge, as fine as if it had been rubbed against a nutmeg-grater *en route*, but as dense as the sands of the sea. Even the Cossack horses in the carriages shook their shaggy coats, and the Isvodstchiks looked a little damp, despite the well-known absorbing powers of their well-worn caftans. And there are the fine uniforms of the officers and soldiers, so soaked, and draggled, and tarnished, and the noble war horses neighing on every side in one wild chorus of dissatisfaction!

It would not be complimentary to compare such fine martial-looking fellows as the Russian officers, and who are so invariably polite to strangers, to drowned rats, but so thoroughly soaked a set of heroes compassionate eyes never looked upon. I must admit that they bore it all like Spartans, and both officers and men chatted, talked, and smoked while they waited for the Emperor, as if it were a pleasant day in May. The spectators were few in number, although it was a grand field day with the Emperor on the ground, and consisted almost exclusively of Englishmen and mujiks of a military turn of mind. The parade-ground, in a corner of which the camp for

120,000 men is situated, is a plain of about the size of a German principality, having one end impinging on the gardens of Petroffsky Palace, and the other bounded by a wood, behind which is a gentle eminence, the site of a new station for the railway. About this point the sham battle was fought, one-half the army defending, while the other attempted to take the position. The Emperor, attended by what on a fine day would have been a most brilliant staff, and such members of the various embassies as did not mind being wet to the skin, rode up and down at intervals between the hostile armies, and critically watched the performance of each successive evolution. It is to be hoped that his Imperial Majesty understood them better than certain of the spectators, for (only this once) I must waive the omniscience of journalism, and confess that my particular comprehension of the order of battle tended slightly in the direction of the obscure. The Cossacks obliged us to dismount at a distance of about two miles from the field, which was soft as pap, and adhesive as glue; the rain came down in torrents, and so dense was the atmosphere that we could not see the hostile armies, although the frequent reports and hollow rumbling of the artillery announced that they were close at hand.

After a sore pilgrimage, we at last came to a rising ground, the rain suddenly ceased, and a sight burst on our view that repaid us for all our previous annoyances. There stood, in battle array, the whole of the famous Imperial Guard, dotted over the plain in huge human parallelograms or glistening squadrons, the bayonets of the infantry in long regular rows sparkling like a diamond necklace, and the varied uniforms of the cavalry glowing like the costumes of some great state pageant. There were the guards *à cheval* in white, with gold burnished cuirasses, and all mounted on splendid chesnut horses. Then there were the Hussars, scarlet and gold, or blue and silver, the regiment of Paul, with their quaint old-fashioned conical caps, the grenadiers, the Cossacks of

the Don, the favourite "Finlandske" regiment, and finally, the artillery in immense force, each gun drawn by horses of unusual size and power. Soon all these masses began to move, each with the regularity of some vast machine, the artillery opened fire, the musketry rolled and rattled, the officers galloped to and fro, and I fear swore a little, and the battle was soon at its height. The position, to judge from the loudness of the report and the prevalence of the smoke, was most resolutely defended, but with what vicissitudes of fortune I am unable to tell, for the tremendous firing brought down the rain again, and the great object with the spectators was to get into shelter as soon as possible. We accordingly, in the simplicity of our hearts, rushed to the wood; but very soon found, to our surprise, that we were in the very centre of the battle. The holders of the eminence had valorously repelled their assailants, and were now driving them pell-mell before them into the plain. Our harbour of refuge became the scene of a desperate hand-to-hand contest, in which the soldiers charged or resisted, rushed about, and fired totally regardless of the nerves of travellers or the convenience of special correspondents. Pop, pop! Bang, bang! Gun-wadding flying about in showers, and an odour of "that villanous saltpetre" of the most smothering intensity! To our immense satisfaction, the hill forces, after a sanguinary struggle, at length cleared the wood, the assailants were driven into the plain and thoroughly defeated, and trumpet signals informed us that the sham battle was over, and that the poor soldiers might go home to dinner and dry clothes. So ended the great battle of Hadinka, the men cheering lustily for the Emperor, and the conquering army celebrating their victory according to Russian custom with songs of triumph, full of wild, warlike melody and national character.

LETTER XVI.

THE MERCHANTS' DINNER TO THE OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS.—LADY GRANVILLE'S BALL.—THE SCOTCH PIPER.

Moscow, *Sept.* 19.

WE are gradually approaching the end of our voluminous programme, and I can assure you that to those whose duty it has been to "assist" at every pageant or festivity, the prospect is the reverse of disagreeable. The Russians, who have been entertained in classes and sections, are of course as fresh as ever; but the strangers, great and small, who have been hurried day and night from review to ball, from religious ceremonial to imperial banquet, look forward with unmitigated satisfaction to the time when the famous festivities of the Great Czar's coronation shall have become a "pleasure of memory," and nothing will remain to be done save to get home as rapidly as possible, and recount, with all due traveller's amplifications, the wonders in which we have been spectators or participators. It will be found, on looking back through the coronation festivities, that the feasting has been pretty generally divided between the church, the army, and the noblesse—the two latter terms being pretty well convertible, seeing that every noble capable of bearing arms is an officer, and every officer is a noble by virtue of his epaulettes. In the universal homage paid to the church by the highest and greatest in the land, may be found the recognition of the vast physical force of the mujik population, whose representatives the clergy are, the upper classes, as in almost every continental country, being rather lukewarm in the matter of religious observances.

In the army is concentrated the whole machinery of secular government, and therefore it is hardly to be

wondered at that on important occasions, these two great sections of the state should come in for the lion's share of the pageants, the dinners, the balls, and the ceremonials. As for the commercial classes, so prominent and powerful in England, they are still kept somewhat in the background, although during the short reign of the present Emperor their social position has already been considerably improved. At the coronation they had a place in the procession, and this week they had the honour of entertaining his imperial Majesty in person, together with all the officers of the guards who are now quartered in Moscow or its neighbourhood. The banquet, one of the most splendid and costly of the coronation series, took place in the great riding-school, a building which is itself one of the most remarkable sights in this most remarkable city. Its erection has been a necessity at once of the Russian climate and the Russian system; the one rendering out-door exercise impossible for a large portion of the year, the other making indispensable the existence of a locality in which military evolutions may be carried on without interruption. Of upwards of twice the arena of Westminster Hall, the great riding-school can accommodate within its vast enclosure two complete regiments of mounted dragoons, who are thus enabled in the coldest day in winter to parade and go through their evolutions under cover and surrounded by an Italian climate. The late Emperor has often reviewed his favourite chevalier guards in the Moscow riding-school, at a time when half an hour's exposure in the open air would have been certain death to man and horse. One of the greatest curiosities of this extraordinary building is its flat roof, built entirely of wood, and having no support but the external walls between which it stretches, a vast expanse, exciting the spectators' wonder as to the mechanical means by which it can be sustained without a single supporting column. I believe the method adopted has been to build it in section, as we build the mainmasts of

our three deckers, and then to lay it on the walls as if it were a lid.

For the banquet of the merchants to the Emperor and the army, the room was expensively and tastefully decorated. At the upper end was a dais, covered with crimson cloth and decorated with the imperial insignia, and ingeniously contrived military trophies, and upon it was placed a table laden with gold and silver plate, and decorated with magnificent vases in malachite and jasper. This was for the Emperor, the Grand Dukes, the generals who had also the honour to be aides-de-camp to his imperial Majesty, and such of the ambassadors as belonged to the noble profession of arms. Singularly enough, the consequence of this regulation was that the only ambassador who had the honour of dining at the imperial table was Aali Pacha, who, being a general in the Turkish army, was qualified to participate in this exclusively military feast. The other ambassadors were present as spectators, but the Turk alone was permitted to put his feet under the imperial mahogany. The rest of the guests dined at forty-eight long tables running parallel along the room, and offering sitting accommodation for nearly four thousand guests. Everything good or rare in the way of eatables and drinkables was present in the utmost profusion, and it only wanted Mr. Bathe gliding silently amongst the guest, and the stentorian Higgs or Harker, imploring "silence for the chair," to make one fancy that the scene was the London Tavern swelled to gigantic proportions, the occasion some grand civic entertainment, and that Bishopsgate-street, not the Kremlin Gardens, was the *locus in quo* of a great prandial solemnity. "One touch of *dinner* makes the whole world kin ;" Russian field-m Marshals enjoy good things quite as well as London aldermen, and pale Circassians from the Caucasus are as critical judges of a glass of claret as the worshipful warden of the Fishmongers' Company.

In one particular, however, the banquet of the riding-

school was decidedly in advance of English public dinners. There were no long speeches to bore the company, or distract the "gentlemen of the press." No perspiring orator, "unaccustomed to public speaking," and "taken entirely by surprise," poured for half an hour his sickening platitudes into disgusted ears, under a discordant fire of hostile forks and spoons. Neither was there a long, bothering or nonsensical list of toasts, but at intervals the Emperor rose and proposed "The Merchants of Moscow," or the Golova gave "The Emperor and imperial family;" then his Majesty took wine with the guests, the walls rang with one strong, tremendous, monosyllabic cheer from four thousand manly voices in response, and in a moment every one was again seated and absorbed in the discussion of the liquid luxuries of the feast. At such a moment, the *coup d'œil* was the most striking that could possibly be imagined. I have before alluded to the great variety and splendour of the Russian military uniforms. There is hardly a colour that has not been called into requisition to classify the various corps of the vast Russian army, nor has the wildest dream that ever entered the brain of military tailor remained unrealised. Scarlet and green, crimson and blue, and even pink and violet, might be reckoned amongst the brilliant uniforms that surrounded the long tables in the riding-school, and when the wearers rose simultaneously to honour their Sovereign's toast, the glitter of gold and silver, and the gay variety of colour, at once charmed, dazzled, and almost confounded the spectator. The galleries were filled with the female noblesse in grand toilette, there was the finest military music, and I may honestly say, in the recognised formula, that the company retired "highly delighted with the evening's entertainment."

One drawback there was, however, which must be mentioned. The givers of the feast, it is said, who had spent 200,000 rubles in its preparation, were not permitted to be partakers, but were consoled by the gracious

deportment of the Emperor, who on retiring from the table condescendingly thanked them for their hospitality, and complimented them on the taste and profusion of the dinner. There was simultaneously another dinner for the soldiers, in the Kremlin Gardens, and it is satisfactory to be able to record that, unlike a recent similar entertainment in London, there was enough and to spare for all the guests. Each soldier had soup, two kinds of meat, pastry, with bread at discretion, and for the lubricatory process a bottle of sherry and a bottle of beer. The despatch with which this liberal allowance of solids and fluids was demolished by the sun-burnt heroes of Sebastopol was one of the most amusing features in the whole day's festivities.

The evening was devoted to a different but not less brilliant gala. For the fifth time since we arrived in Moscow, Lady Granville threw open her splendid saloons to the Russian noblesse, and it would be hard to find a more distinguished company than assembled at the ball of last evening. There were the Grand Duke Constantine and his beautiful wife, the Grand Duke Nicholas, the Grand Duchess Marie, and several other members of the imperial family. There were Princesses and Countesses without number, and amongst the men might be recognised the most distinguished names in the military or diplomatic circles of Russia. Lady Granville danced with the Grand Duke, but his lordship was too busy all night making his guests comfortable to join in the Terpsichorean pastime. McAllister, Lord Stafford's piper, was in attendance in the ante-room, in full uniform, kilt, and philibeg, it being the intention of the noble host that in some interval of the dance the Russian guests should be made acquainted with the peculiar characteristics of Highland music. But the bardic soul of McAllister was impatient of restraint. For some moments he remained standing in the ante-room, beating time to an imaginary reel, and champing like a war horse impatient of the bit, until at last, what with the strains of rival music from

the band, the intoxicating influence of a thousand wax lights reflected from the porcelain walls, and the bright forms of beauty that flitted to and fro before the gaze of the bewildered Highlander, flesh and blood could hold out no longer ; the inspired Gael shouldered his pipes, and, striking up a pibroch that would awaken the dead, marched, with measured tread, as if at the head of his clan, into the centre of the brilliant ring round which Grand Dukes and Duchesses were at that moment dancing the polonaise. Loud above the puny attempts of catgut and brass rose the wild martial note of the bagpipes. The musicians threw down their instruments in despair, the company ceased dancing, and McAllister was in a moment the centre of an admiring circle, completely absorbed in his pibroch, and beating time with as much accuracy and sang froid as if unconscious of the presence of the foremost of the world's *élite*. I watched the effect of this strange music on the unaccustomed ears of the Russians with great interest. They were at first evidently astounded, the officers putting their hands to their ears, and the ladies crossing their hands and gazing on the kilted *Æolus* in mute surprise. But soon it became evident that there was a sympathy between the warlike race on the one side and the warlike music on the other. Both ladies and gentlemen chatted, smiled, and listened ; and when, shortly after, the Grand Duchess Constantine, one of the most beautiful women in Russia, retired to another apartment, she sent for McAllister, who played "The White Cockade" in a manner that elicited her imperial highness's gracious commendation. From that moment he became the fashion, and several times in the course of the evening he played again to admiring audiences.

I may mention before parting with our musical friend, that since his arrival he has been quite a lion amongst the Russians, who follow him in crowds through the streets. There is much speculation amongst the mujiks as to his real character and functions, but the most prevailing impression is that he is the chief of all the foreign

ambassadors, and that with a fastidious refinement of hauteur, he prefers walking, on the ground that none of the carriages are grand enough for his notions of personal dignity. At about one o'clock the ball was at its climax, there being more than six hundred persons present, and at half-past one the Grand Duke led Lady Granville, and Lord Granville the Grand Duchess, to the imperial supper room, where an entertainment, combining English abundance with continental elegance, was prepared for their imperial highnesses. Both here, and at the buffets for the general company, everything was served on massive plate; the wines and viands were of the highest character; and the Russian noblesse, no bad judges in such matters, gave the best possible proof of their approval in the gusto with which they partook of the good things provided. In fine, the ball was universally pronounced to be a complete and brilliant success.

LETTER XVII.

THE "FESTIN DU PEUPLE."

Moscow, Sept. 20.

IF the modern Russians be the descendants of the ancient Scythians, there is one thing in which they do not resemble their frugal ancestors, and that is the costly character of their hospitality. Whoever has had patience to follow the narrative of the coronation of the Emperor must have remarked that everything has finished with a feast. The Emperor feasts everybody, the noblesse feast the Emperor, the ambassadorial sojourn is one continuous dinner party, the merchants feast the soldiers, and lastly the government, in compliance with ancient Slavonic custom, feasts the people. One cannot be always dining, but to write for ever about dining is still worse; and,

therefore, I have left several items in the coronation bill of fare unnoticed ; but a select party of two hundred thousand people is a thing not to be seen every day ; and to those at a distance who could not have been present in the body, a few details of the great "Festin du Peuple" may not prove uninteresting, the more so as it is one of the rare occasions on which the "black people," as they are emphatically called here, are allowed to approach their sovereign in convivial intercourse, to eat of his salt, and to demonstrate their loyalty under the influences which are proverbially said to give loyalty its greatest impetus.

It is hardly necessary to say that the "Festin du Peuple" is an important item in every coronation programme since the time when Boris Gudenoff found it necessary to appeal to *panem et circenses* as a means of reconciling the people to his usurpation. It has often been a scene of riot and excess, sometimes of disorder and confusion, and even so lately as the coronation of the Emperor Nicholas, circumstances arose which still leave unpleasant reminiscences in the minds of those who are old enough to have "assisted" on that important occasion. It is just thirty years since a banquet similar to that which was celebrated to-day was spread in the Krasnaja Ploschad, the tables laden with the good things of this world, and the square enclosed with galleries, from which the great boyards enjoyed the prospect of their serfs enjoying an abundant banquet at least once during the term of their natural lives. The young Emperor, handsome as Apollo, and surrounded with all the adjuncts of imperial splendour, presided on a throne erected for the occasion, and a signal from him was to have inaugurated a protracted banquet, to be gone through with all due formality, dignity, and decorum.

But the quarter million of mujiks who had waited round the barriers from an early hour in the morning, some of them the whole of the night before, took a different view of the case, and, the moment the signal was

given, rushed upon the feast like so many cannibals, not to eat, but to carry away; and, in the twinkling of an eye, everything eatable and drinkable had disappeared from the tables. Those who had not been strong or active enough to get portions of the good cheer, tore off the tablecloths, and broke up the tables, using the fractured legs as weapons to make the earlier plunderers disgorge some share of their hard-won booty. It is even said that the galleries for the spectators were torn down, and that Cashmere shawls and diamond necklaces went the way of the legs of mutton and roast chickens, to the great alarm and chagrin of the aristocratic audience in the "Beautiful Place." To prevent the recurrence of such disorders, great pains and precautions had been taken on the present occasion, while the elements lent their aid in cooling mujik ardour and preserving the public tranquillity. It has been said that the most threatening *emeute* may often be nipped in the bud by the well-directed hose of a fire-engine, but if all the fire-engines in Europe, and America to boot, had been brought into requisition, they could not have given the crowd so thorough a soaking as did the pitiless rain, which from "morn to dewy eve" had been saturating sheepskins, soaking through caftans, and drenching military uniforms all through, in the great plain of the Kadinka, which, for the reasons above stated, had been chosen as the site of the present coronation banquet.

Having secured a carriage, no easy task at such a time, when every man who has a kopeck to spare must ride to dinner, I drove out to the plain at an early hour, and all along the route found my passage obstructed by the premonitory symptoms of the great festival. The "black people" covered the *trottoir* like a plague of locusts, ten times as numerous as the merry pilgrims to Greenwich fair, but looking as serious as judges, and evidently making abstruse mental calculations as to how much of the anticipated provender would fall to their several shares. At the first glance, every mujik would appear to be cast

in the same mould, and clad in the same monotonous costume ; but as the shepherd is said, by dint of continuous observation, to be able to distinguish the faces of all his sheep, so the curious *voyageur*, by frequently passing through the streets, and watching the people as he passes, obtains a sort of classification, and is able to detect grades and differences in what appeared at first one dreary, dead level of hopeless equality. They were all out to-day, gentle and simple. There was the rough mujik of the plains in his sheepskin coat, shapeless, indescribable hat, and bearded like a patriarch. Little cares he about social or political problems. He works when he can't help it, keeps himself as warm as he can, washes as seldom as he can, and when inclined for jollity, sings a song the burthen of which is, "Oh, don't ask me to read or write." Sturdily he trudged along with thoughts intent on quass and vodka, and heeded nothing the teeming rain that was searching out every crevice in his woolly covering. Close behind him followed the fair partner of his joys and sorrows, looking for all the world like a bundle of faded calico, mounted on elephantine legs, and furnished with a capacious basket to contain the anticipated spoils of the "Festin." Then there was the mujik of the town, tall and slim, in well-worn caftan, and pushing a-head with that shuffling gait which long practice on the most abominable pavement in the world has made second nature. There is a restless activity in his eye, a studied servility in his manner, that bespeaks the man who runs errands, sleeps in doorways in summer, and on stoves, like a Salamander in winter, cringes like a spaniel when you look at him, and asks for "Tschai" the moment your features relax into the faintest approximation to a smile. Lastly, we had the mujik well to do, clad in Lincoln green, and with hat of unexceptionable beaver, who keeps his own drotschki, and drives a prosperous trade in the Vertscoi. He is worth his 200,000 roubles perhaps, affects diamonds, and has his daughter learning the piano, and the four languages. But the

sword of Damocles hangs over his head by a single hair, as the rough country boyard, to whom he owes fealty, may at any time cancel his "pass," and recal him to the roughest labour of rural life—or perhaps send him off for a soldier.

Men of this class are pointed out to me every day, who have over and over again offered thousands of roubles for their freedom, but their masters are inexorable, as one of the greatest luxuries of a Russian nobleman is to be able to point to a man and say, "You see that fellow, he is my serf, and is worth a million silver roubles." On they went in a never-ending stream, the poor ploughing steadily through fluid mud, the well-to-do, dashing, splashing on their neat drotschkies behind horses that would raise a shout of admiration in Hyde Park.

The whole of the roadway was covered with equipages for miles, every successive one of which offered some new variety of vehicular monstrosity. There was the Telega of the road, like a little wooden dish set on a cumbrous gun-carriage, and accommodating two or three human bundles that turned their backs to the rain, and took their soaking with the most stoical equanimity. There was the more pretentious Tarantas, the substitute for our western post carriage, shaped like a child's cradle, and capable of accommodating a whole litter of eager sight-seekers. I looked upon these bone-breakers with a shudder, as I thought of some English friends who had just started on a journey across the steppe in a vehicle of this description. Then came the aristocratic Berlin, or calèche, drawn by four horses, sometimes abreast, sometimes in a team with traces ten or twelve yards in length. Through the windows of these might be seen the powdered head and gold embroidery of veteran diplomacy, the bright eyes of fair ladies, and the rosy cheeks of chubby children all agog for the Kadinka plain. One would have thought that all the odd-looking vehicles and all the fine horses in the world had been collected for the accommodation of this leviathan dinner-party.

It will be easily conceived that in such a crowd our progress was anything but rapid. Sometimes we got on a little, sometimes we "poled" our leader, sometimes got poled ourselves from behind, and then such a mingled torrent of Russian abuse and English vociferation ! Sometimes the gendarmes ordered us to stop, sometimes permitted us to go on, while ever and anon the horrid little Cossack, like so many mounted Skye terriers, hovered and jabbered, and galloped over people, and shook their fists at "Isvodtchiks," and seemed as if the rain had boiled them up to a furious internal fermentation. We could not tell what it was all about ; but fancied we had done something that might possibly doom us to Siberia or the knout. Everything, however, has an end, except rain in Russia ; and so at last, we made our way to the covered gallery which had been constructed for the diplomatic body and their friends. A large space had been railed off, in the centre of which was a handsome pavilion for the accommodation of the Emperor and his family, and round it, on three sides, were galleries similar to that in which we found ourselves located. For the first half-hour we had ample amusement in watching each successive arrival in our own gallery. There were the Americans, in their blue uniforms and yellow plumes ; the Austrians in their magnificent hussar pelisses, the fur on which was worth thousands of roubles ; the Russians, in every colour under the sun ; and the diplomats, in blue and gold, and a painful monotony of tight boots. We had also our Persian and Turkish friends, who, it is said, are never failing in their attendance wherever there is eating and drinking going on ; and Circassians, in whose yellow skins and awfully hooked noses I cannot see any type of beauty, whatever ethnologists may say to the contrary.

In strong contrast to all these parti-coloured masqueraders, I observed a pale, dark man in clerical robes of black, relieved in front by the thin stripe of violet, and wearing the tremendous shovel hat that marks the "monseigneur" of the Vatican. It was the secretary to the

Pope's Nuncio, who, after some negotiation, and many scruples to be overcome, has been duly received at the Russian court, notwithstanding all the remonstrances of Patriarch or Archimandrite. From our elevated position we could now see the arrangements for the feast, and they were abundant and worthy of the occasion. Several miles of tables surrounded the enclosure on every side, and on them were placed sheep roasted whole, standing bolt upright, and with their horns gilded ready for the sacrifice. With them were alternated great mountains of bread, and here and there dwarf pine-trees, from which hung in tempting festoons the savoury sausages so dear to Sarmatian palates. Pails of beer decorated every corner in which there was room for them to stand, and round this tempting feast the tantalised mujiks clustered, impatient for the signal to begin. At the angles of each square, formed by the arrangement of the tables, stood fountains from which wine and vodka were to flow—liquids which the rain from above was rapidly diluting to a most harmless amount of stimulus. For the amusement of the young people there were the Montagnes Russes, the turnabouts, and the circus—and, wonderful instance of the pursuit of pleasure under difficulties, every one of these machines had constant employment. Then there was the circus, under the royal pavilion, and the balloon, and the bands, that played with a perseverance worthy of fine weather.

Long before the arrival of the Emperor, the Grand Duke Constantine was on the ground, and the people, who, up to that moment had been kept at arm's length, clustered round his imperial highness, and coaxed him out of permission "just to look at the tables." They got in, and the consequence may be easily imagined. In the twinkling of an eye roast sheep, junks of beef, mountains of bread, sausage trees, and pails of beer, had all disappeared, and the mujiks were standing on the tables, with their mouths and pockets filled to bursting, and the empty beer-pails on their heads for umbrellas.

From the table-cloths the ladies had improvised flowing mantillas, and the audience was in comfortable condition to cheer the Emperor and enjoy the amusements provided. As all this occurred at a considerable distance from where I stood, I cannot say how the sheep were dissected or the beef sliced, but this I know, that no knives or forks were allowed for fear of accident, and, therefore, the obvious conclusion is that the division was effected in a very primitive manner. We amused ourselves for some minutes speculating on the probabilities, wondered how one man had obtained the leg of mutton that peeped out of his breeches pocket, how another had performed the decapitation that enabled him to clap a sheep's head, with gilded horns, on the top of his old hat, and at last began to look back at the Petroffski Palace, and the long *Haie* of Lesghian guards and Circassians, that waited the passage of the Emperor to his pavilion.

At last, about two o'clock, the imperial *cortége* emerged from the château, the bands struck up the national hymn, the people cheered lustily, and the Emperor, followed by a brilliant but rather damp staff, rode rapidly into the enclosure. Without meaning any disrespect to the Emperor, or the crowd of generals by whom he was followed, the best idea I can give you of the effect is by comparing it to some well-got-up cavalcade in the circus, with prancing horses, and riders in every variety of showy costume. His Majesty rode rapidly round the enclosure, followed by his staff, and then dashing through an opening rode down amongst the people, who fell back like retiring waves on each side, and shook the dense atmosphere with their joyful recognition of this gracious proof of their sovereign's confidence in their loyalty and affection. We could see the white plumes winding sinuously through the crowd, as cheer upon cheer was taken up and prolonged through each section of this vast multitude. The rain, which came down in a pitiless stream, was completely forgotten, and the people had a

gleam of delight, the memory of which will sustain them until the next "Festin." Having made his rounds, the Emperor returned to the Pavilion, and the sports of the circus began with an act of equitation by a female martyr in white muslin, who was drenched to the skin long before she had leaped through her paper balloon. Then the acrobats drooped over the tops of their poles like so many drowned rats, and the "Veteran Green" of the Moscow æronautics struggled hard to make the gas inside his vast machine produce the proper amount of distension in spite of the collapsing influence of the water outside. At last a tolerable amount of rotundity was produced, the balloon lazily ascended, to be in a moment lost in the mist; and a signal from the imperial pavilion pronounced the sports of the "Festin du Peuple" to have terminated.

Then came the smashing of carriages, the kicking over of traces, the loud neighing of the wild horses, and the frantic calls for "Ivan," and "Basil," and "Constantin," and "Alexis." Fancy the Haymarket at the close of a Jenny Lind night, and the linkboys suddenly endowed with the Slavonic dialect, and the rain coming down in torrents, and the ladies waiting muffled up in the vestibule, and the gentlemen craning out to see if the carriages are coming, and throw in a handful of Budish-nicks, and Cossacks, and gendarmes, and you will be able to join with me in imagination in realising the picture afforded by the grand wind-up of the people's dinner party in the Kadinka.

LETTER XVIII.

THE PEOPLE'S BALL AT THE KREMLIN.

Moscow, *Monday, Sept. 22.*

THE splendid saloons of the Kremlin Palace presented, on Sunday evening, one of those strange scenes which can only be witnessed in a country where a pure despotism prevails, and where, consequently, all minor distinctions of class disappear in the presence of an all-powerful king and his idolatrously submissive people. I have before endeavoured to give the readers of the *Daily News* some faint idea of the splendours of the Imperial Kremlin, with its vestibules of porphyry and jasper—its lofty gilded and elaborately-decorated saloons, and its omnipresent decorations, in which the elegance of the Renaissance, and the curious conceits of the Byzantine styles are so strangely, yet so artistically mingled. But the dominating sentiment of everything in Russia is Byzantine, and from the Byzantine basis the artist must start, no matter what may be the work in hand,—whether a church, a palace, or a public institution. In the Kremlin Palace the fusion has been a complete success. In the exterior, the vast Italian façade is pierced with Byzantine windows, and the apparent harmony with which the two styles mingle goes far to prove the common eastern origin of both. In the interior, the twisted columns of gold blend magnificently with the Renaissance details, and gilding and colour, gay arabesque, and burnished cornice, meet the eye in every direction.

At eight o'clock yesterday evening, these sumptuous halls presented a strange but most characteristic spectacle. In the costliest palace of his imperial home the Czar held high festival with the "black people," and twenty-five thousand mujiks, male and female, assembled to take one

passing glance at the splendour, in the creation of which they are the humblest but most effective instruments. Unlike the "festin" of the previous day, no pitiless pelt-ing rain was present to soak their rusty caftans, or mar their rare moment of enjoyment.

It was a strange but most suggestive sight, to stand at the top of the grand escalier, and, by the illumination of a thousand wax lights, to watch the dark, dingy-looking column as—impeded only by its own numbers—it slowly ascended and streamed unobstructed through the gilded saloons. There were huge bearded men in the genuine sheepskin of the steppes ; others were in the rusty monotonous costume of the town, their great boots splashed with the mud through which they had waded to the ball, and the universal mujik hat, which looks like a brand upon their heads ; and as they shuffled along over the parquet-erie floors they displayed as much coolness and non-chalance as if they were American Indians, or high-bred English gentlemen. This *nil admirari* deportment of the Russian peasant is a thing that strikes the inquiring stranger as much as anything else he sees in this country of wonders and contradiction. Basil, or Ivan, or Yermoloff, as the case may be, is certainly either the dullest fellow in the world, or else has acquired the art of concealing his emotions in wonderful perfection. He goes to review or ball, or any other grand sight most pertinaciously, and as if it were a sort of moral or loyal duty ; but except in such cases as the "festin," where there are whole sheep to be torn limb from limb, roast chickens to be pocketed, or pails of beer to be swilled, he "assists" at the most magnificent entertainment with a stoical apathy that shows his organ of wonder to be very slightly developed, or, at all events, to be under the most efficient control.

In the gilded halls of the Kremlin, yesterday evening, he neither turned to the right or left, nor looked upwards or downwards, as he marched slowly from the Salle Blanche to the Hall of St. Andrew, penetrated the imperial

bed-chamber of Catherine, or plunged into the gloomy vaulted rooms of the Terema. And his faithful wife faithfully imitated her liege lord's well-simulated composure. With a handkerchief tied over her head, and her nondescript dress swelling out in bundles like the sails of a ship or the badly compressed stomach of a deputy-lieutenant, she marched along with the calm dignity of a judge, and took all the magnificence that surrounded her as calmly as if "to the manner born." Only at the buffets that plentifully studded the recesses of each saloon was any redundancy of mujik vitality exhibited, either by male or female. There, indeed, you might see the "black people" "lashing themselves like a surge" against the tables, and bewildering the imperial servants in their vociferous demands for refreshments. Vassili supped "Tschai" with a spoon of silver gilt, out of Dresden cups worth five guineas a-piece, and Katrine munched by the dozen peaches every one of which had cost a rouble. Champagne was the favourite beverage, but even humble beer was not disdained, and the tables would soon have been as bare as the tables of the "Festin," but for the assiduous care with which they were constantly replenished by the imperial lacqueys. Here and there, like stars in a stormy sky, the diamonds of the fair *noblesse* or the rich uniforms of officers might be seen to glisten; but they were few and far between; and, as a general rule, the crowd was as decidedly mujik in its character as if it had been gathered in the Krasnaja Ploschad, or the Kadinka plain. The occasion was a masquerade, and there were no masks beyond what a religious abstinence of soap had provided. It was a ball, and there was no dancing, although three military bands, placed in the principal saloons, played waltzes and polkas splendidly all night. Neither could it be called a promenade, for twenty-five thousand guests had barely room to elbow and hustle each other, which they did with a vigour that would have done honour to the Surrey gallery.

The Emperor entered the room, at nine o'clock, in a manner that at once showed his Imperial Majesty's good taste and his confidence in the loyal affection of his people. On grand occasions, when none but *haute noblesse* and "distinguished strangers" are admitted, the Czar is preceded by fifty chamberlains to clear the way, their velvet coats heavy with gold embroidery, and the dignity of their motions sorely impeded by the tightness of their shoes. But, on this occasion, his Majesty, with the Empress leaning on one arm, and the Empress-mother on the other, plunged good-humouredly into the crowd, and nodded and smiled good-naturedly in recognition of the almost oriental reverences of his subjects. There could be no mistaking the warm affection that lighted up the rough countenances of the mujiks as they crowded round their sovereign, nor was it possible to avoid the conclusion that, if the Russian government be a despotism, it is at least, in as far as the Emperor and the great mass of the people are concerned, a despotism of the heart quite as much as of the strong arm. The Emperor proceeded slowly through the room, with difficulty making his way through the dense mass that surrounded him; and some said that he walked a mazourka, taking the hands successively of the great ladies as he passed along. I cannot, however, vouch for the fact, as the crowd was too great, and the people were too tall for any one not in front to get a satisfactory glimpse at the imperial movements.

At ten there was a supper, of which a select portion of the company partook; and shortly afterwards the imperial party retired from the ball-room. The Grand Duke Constantine, who is a great favourite with the people, stopped later; but by twelve o'clock all the aristocratic company had cleared off, while the mujiks kept pouring in to a much later hour. I believe they were much better pleased than with the "festin" of the previous day, as they were protected from the pitiless pelting of the storm, and, if report speaks truly, had

a much better quality of provisions. It is said that at the "festin" much of the meat was tainted, and that a peasant took the liberty of hinting as much to his Majesty, in answer to a condescending inquiry. If this be true, the contractors, or the weather—anything but the Emperor—was to blame, as it is well known that his Majesty's orders were of the most liberal character. However, "all's well that ends well;" and it is satisfactory to be able to say, in conclusion, that the whole passed off without a single accident or the slightest confusion or irregularity.

LETTER XIX.

LORD GRANVILLE'S STATE BALL.

Moscow, *Sept.* 25.

ALTHOUGH you must be pretty well tired of festivities by this time, still I suppose you will be glad to learn some particulars of Lord Granville's state ball, which may justly be pronounced one of the crowning fêtes of the whole ceremonial. It is already known that through the previous exertions of Sir John Acton, his lordship's nephew and secretary, the British embassy was the best lodged of all the distinguished strangers, in the magnificent palace of Prince Graziani, an Italian nobleman, who, I believe, consulted more his taste than his finances in fitting it with costly furniture, and articles of *vertu*. The magnificent suite of rooms had been newly decorated for the present occasion, and a new dancing-room extemporised, in the shape of a pavilion of regal dimensions, erected by our old friend Ben Edgington, of London Bridge. The rooms, although small in comparison with the vast saloons of the Kremlin Palace, are still of handsome proportions, and when decorated in warm glowing colours, and well-lighted—nothing like

plenty of light—have a truly splendid appearance. It is hardly necessary to say that last evening they put on their best aspect, when set out in grand parade, and filled with everything that was noble, distinguished, or well-dressed in Russia. The imperial party was, of course, received at the principal entrance by the noble host, and conducted to the throne, or rather seat, which had been prepared for his Imperial Majesty's reception. Every man was in uniform, and every woman in plumes and diamonds ; the finest music filled every *salle*, and the walls exhibited a perfect galaxy of wax-lights. You may, therefore, imagine what must have been the effect of the picture, when, at a signal from the Imperial guest, the ball commenced. The Czar danced often and well, honouring in succession Lady Granville, Lady Emily Peel, and Lady Stafford, by selecting them for his partners. The supper was laid in the porcelain-room, the scene of your friend M'Allister's exploits ; but for the Emperor himself a magnificent repast was spread in one of the saloons that fill up the long front of the building. To this room none but the most select of the guests found admission. In order that his Imperial Majesty might not be incommoded, the invitations were under eight hundred ; but so great was the anxiety of the Russian *noblesse* to “assist” at Lady Granville's ball, that it is thought his lordship will be obliged to have an *encore*, at which, I believe, his Imperial Majesty will also be present. Nothing could exceed the gracious friendliness and condescension of the Emperor's department. He chatted freely and frequently with his distinguished host, and danced very often ; in short, threw himself with complete *abandon* into the spirit of the evening's entertainment. Several times in the course of the evening his Majesty quietly took a chair and sat down among the people, and no one thought it necessary to stand up, or move out of the way. The Grand Dukes, who are very simple and unaffected, danced away as if they enjoyed it. Lord Granville having expressed a hope

that such had been the case with the Grand Duke Constantine, his Imperial Highness replied, "Look at my face, and you will see whether I have or not."

LETTER XX.

THE RUSSIAN CHASSE.

Moscow, *Sept.* 26.

AMID the din and confusion of balls and reviews and receptions, I had almost forgotten to inform you that on Tuesday last there was a chasse for the Court and Corps Diplomatique at Staritzin, twelve versts from Moscow, on the Warsaw road. The meet was near an old ruined palace which was built by the Empress Catherine, and was formerly surrounded by a deer-park; but the place has been much neglected of late years, and is now in rather a dilapidated state. The Emperor was to be on horseback at ten, and before that hour the sportsmen arrived in great numbers. Lord Granville's barouche, in which he drove four English horses himself, was a great contrast to the other carriages, which were most of them drawn by post-horses, harnessed in the Russian fashion, four abreast, and driven by a mujik in a sheepskin coat. At all the villages on the road the peasants had turned out to stare at the unusual concourse; and at one of them the elders of the village had brought out bread and salt on a small table to offer the Emperor as he passed. Those of the diplomatic corps who had no horses of their own were mounted from the imperial stable, and on arriving at Tsaritzin they found their hunters ready saddled. The steeds had rather more of a military than a sporting appearance, and looked as if they were more accustomed to the parade-ground than the hunting-field; but they were mostly strong, well-shaped animals. The English

embassy mustered very strong, and were most of them mounted on their own horses, brought from England. There were only five ladies out, four of whom were English—Ladies E. Peel, Stafford, Margaret L. Gower, and Ailesbury; the fifth was a Princess Bariatinsky, a very pretty woman. The Emperor arrived about half-past ten, in a plain calèche with four horses. His two sons were with him, and the Grand Dukes Nicholas and Michael followed. They were all in military costume, the Emperor in a hussar uniform. His Majesty got on his horse, a small grey Arab, and rode off immediately to cover, followed by the field, about 200 in number. After riding a mile and a half through some very muddy lanes, we came to the scene of action, where the sport commenced by some coursing. Hares, however, were not very plentiful in the open, and they proceeded to draw the covers with a pack of harriers. The hounds were a set of queer-looking little dogs, which would hardly have passed muster in Leicestershire; but to make up for their deficiencies, they were accompanied by ten splendid piqueurs, dressed in gorgeous red liveries and mounted on little Cossack horses. These individuals were provided with long horns, on which they constantly played; and when the dogs were running they rode wildly among them, cracking their whips and shouting. The covers were small plantations of brushwood, and the mode of proceeding was as follows:—The ten piqueurs took the hounds into the cover, other piqueurs being stationed outside with greyhounds, which they let slip upon any unfortunate animal that looked out of the cover. In this way a great many hares and plump little foxes, who looked as if their early lives had been spent in some comfortable hutch, and did not seem at all used to the amusement, were disposed of. Two wolves were reserved for the finale, and were held down by dogs to have their throats cut. The most curious part of the proceeding was the strong infusion of the military element, which the Russians seem to be unable ever to divest themselves

of. The ground was kept by Cossacks, as if for a review. The Emperor and all the officers were in military uniform, and the huntsmen looked more like hussars than anything else.

After the chasse, luncheon was provided at a kind of shooting-box close to the meet of the morning. In one of the rooms there were four small round tables, at one of which the Emperor sat, with Lady Emily Peel on one side and Lady Ailesbury on the other, Lord Granville, Lady Stafford, and Lady Margaret Leveson Gower being at the same table. The other tables were occupied by the Grand Dukes, the English embassy, and other visitors. Lord Granville was the only special ambassador present. After the luncheon, the Emperor, in the most gracious manner, said "Good-bye" to his guests, and got into his carriage. The whole affair was over by three o'clock.

LETTER XXI.

CONCLUSION OF THE MOSCOW FÊTES.—THE FIREWORKS.

Moscow, Sept. 30.

FINIS CORONAT OPUS, the *feu d'artifice* has finished the Moscow festivities, and the holy city, with its extraordinary buildings, its innumerable churches, and its variegated population, returns to its normal state of tranquillity. After the "festin" the fireworks formed the great feature of the people's share of the fun, and consequently much expectation had been raised, and considerable gossip had circulated respecting them for many days previous to their coming off. As the popular organ of wonder always delights in statistics, the number and cost of the various items had been circumstantially stated, and there was not a mujik who was not ready to swear that there would be at least one bouquet of forty thousand

rockets, every one of which was worth two roubles. But the judicious shook their heads as they looked up at the continuously lowering sky, and expanded their umbrellas to the pitiless, persevering, through and through soaking rain. Each party has now had its triumph, the mujiks have assisted at the fireworks without saturated sheepskins, and the weather-prophets been justified by a density of atmosphere that dimmed the brilliancy of the most vivacious tourbillon, and enveloped the imperial balcony as with a pall during nearly the whole of the evening. The site was also admirably chosen, both for sight-seeing and for immunity from accidents. The college of the Junker cadets is a beautiful building, forming the residence of a wealthy merchant, and is situated far away from Kremlin and Verskoi, over in Sheppok, beloved of steam-boiler factories and cotton "fabriks." The ground is almost amphitheatric in form, so that in spite of obstructive Cossacks, and surly gendarmes, in cloaks of enormous amplitude, everything that stood upon two legs had a full view of everything that was able to emerge from the smoke, which was enough to make the Londoner, reminiscent of his dear native November fogs, decidedly nostalgic. As usual, everything was military in its character,—the Emperor in full uniform, the court in ditto, the diplomats emulating the imperial footmen in the redundancy of their gold lace, and the French, Spaniards, and Austrians in all the perplexing variety of the military harlequinade. Right opposite to the imperial balcony, the Narva Arch was filled by a huge transparency, telling all those who were up in Karamsin how one Ivan Soussarin had saved the life of the Emperor Nicholas, and the *modus operandi*. You will see by the printed programme, which I send, and which will be a curiosity for English amateurs in pyrotechnics, how grand and varied the exhibition was intended to be ; but, unfortunately, the first two or three flights filled the whole vicinity of the imperial balconies with a smoke as black as we are accustomed to see floating over the

Thames, and the remainder could only be discerned in fitful flashes, picturesque, certainly, but decidedly unintelligible. We had music also ; amongst the rest, an arrangement (which would have done honour to Jullien) of the "National Hymn," the drum parts to be played by cannon, to be timeously let off for the purpose. I had previously attended a rehearsal of this grand effect, and must confess had not formed any very sanguine expectations of its success. The plan was to have electric wires communicating with all the touch-holes of the guns, the other ends being appended to the keys of a piano, at which the maestro was to preside, and deal out with due precision this novel and astounding accompaniment. But galvanic batteries will have their little whims and caprices as well as ourselves, and consequently, sometimes the guns hung fire, and sometimes went off too soon, so that although making a sufficient amount of crash, they were quite as successful in creating confusion. As with the rehearsal so with the performance. The thousand chanters and two thousand musicians were frequently thrown out in the most solemn passages in the "National Hymn" by a cannonade, which, had it come in at the proper time, would have produced literally an electric effect. However, every one had come to be pleased and astonished, and Russia is not a country where people are apt to find fault when it is the Imperial pleasure that universal good-humour should prevail. Everything went off well, and the vast crowds retired in the most orderly manner, as is the custom in Russia. A few mujiks trampled to death, more or less, would not justify me in qualifying this assertion, as the fact is never considered worth mentioning, even in the "local papers."

LETTER XXII.

(NOT BEFORE PUBLISHED.)

MOSCOW.—THE ENGLISH RESIDENTS.—THE ENGLISH CHURCH.—
ENGLISH GOVERNESSES.—ENGLISH MANUFACTURES.—THE TRAKTIR-
RUSSIAN POLICY TOWARDS THE ENGLISH.

—♦—
Moscow, Oct. 3.

ALTHOUGH not exactly within the four corners of my commission, it would perhaps be thought strange if I left Moscow without collecting some few facts connected with the subjects which form the title of this letter. It is perhaps not generally known that next to Archangel, where a factory was granted to Chancellor and his brave comrades, Moscow contains the oldest English factory, as it is called, and the oldest English church, in Russia. There are at present many Englishmen, and men of pure English descent, residing in Moscow, and within a circuit of 100 versts ; and, whatever continental journals may say to the contrary, they are as happy and on as good terms with their Russian neighbours as it is possible for men to be. One of the greatest paper-makers in Russia is Mr. H——, a stout Kentish-man, who has resided upwards of twenty years in the country, and who has realised a large fortune, he keeps a couple of carriages, and looks as hearty as if he had never left “the garden of England.” His wife is a Russian lady ; and, judging from the air of happiness and comfort that pervades their whole domestic circle, I should not conclude that the political differences had any very serious effect in disturbing their connubial harmony. I should observe, that the manufacture of paper is very much encouraged and protected by the Russian government, and that much of it will bear comparison with our best specimens ; but still the best is made by Mr. H—— and other English manufacturers.

and wherever the native manufacturers approach them, it is with the aid of English machines, most of which are made by your neighbours, Bryan, Donkin, and Co., Bermondsey. The Russians, who have the faculty of imitation in a very high degree of perfection, have made facsimiles of these machines, and brought them into use ; but they soon get out of order, and the English article has long since resumed its place in Russian estimation.

Another instance of *entente cordiale* between the two peoples is the great factory over in Sheppok, for the construction of all sorts of mill machinery. The head of this firm is the son of one of the wealthiest merchants in Russia, an intelligent and accomplished young man, who speaks English with great fluency ; but the acting partner, the head and hands of the undertaking, is a stalwart North Briton, of whom, as I am too far away to see his blushes, I shall say that he is one of the best fellows I ever met, either at home or abroad. There are many other Englishmen residing in and about Moscow similarly situated, and to the honour of both parties be it said, that when, at the commencement of the war, they waited on the authorities and proposed to leave Russia rather than be called on to exercise their several arts in the production of articles likely to be used against their native country, they were informed that they were the Emperor's guests, that they were under his protection, and that he esteemed them all the more highly for their patriotism. But this is not a singular instance, for both in Petersburg and Moscow I have heard numerous anecdotes illustrative of the almost fastidious delicacy of the late Emperor in his deportment towards the English residents during the war. At its very commencement a proclamation was issued, assuring them of his protection, and calling on his own subjects to maintain their ancient reputation for hospitality, and never to forget the sacred character of a guest ; and, although I made many inquiries, I could not find a single instance in which the Imperial exhortation has been disregarded. The best

possible judges, the English residents themselves, are unanimous in their statement that what was indifference and toleration before the war, became the most studied attention during its progress.

Let me be understood, as in the matter referring chiefly to the intentions and acts of the Emperor himself, and those high functionaries who were immediately under his eye and influence ; for one or two cases have reached my ears which show that many of the subordinates would, if they dared, have pursued a different conduct. Amongst others, I was told that, after one of the great Russian defeats, an intimation was sent to Mr. Grey, the chaplain of the English factory in Moscow, that he must no longer pray that "Queen Victoria may be victorious over all her enemies ;" to which he firmly replied, that he would rather be silent altogether than thus to mutilate his national service. Further, he transmitted a statement of the whole case to the Emperor, and the telegraph soon brought back an order permitting him to pray for his sovereign, or for any one else he thought fit.

Not the least interesting of the sights of Moscow is the little church of which Mr. Grey is the pious, earnest, and indefatigable minister. It was rather a long drive every Sunday from the Grande Lubianka, in which the "Dom" of my friend Chollet is situated, to the Tchernichoff Pereoulk, the half street half green lane in the centre of which the British chapel raises its unpretending head. No gothic arches, no classic portico, indicates the character of the temple ; but a long brick cottage of one story above the basement forms the church on one side of its street door, and the modest residence of the chaplain on the other. It will hardly be believed that Mr. Grey's accommodation does not exceed three or four rooms, while his salary is only a couple of hundred pounds a year, to be eked out by the very uncertain and slender profits of the school, to maintain which is one of the conditions of his appointment. Now, when it is considered that the British chaplain is the first man upon

whom every Englishman calls on his arrival in Moscow, and the man by whom, if he be of suitable rank, he expects to be asked to dinner ; that he is also the man to whom every poor countryman or woman flies in their distress for food or protection, or the means of getting home ; and further, that he is the natural head of British society in Moscow, I am sure that in England, the chosen home of rich benefices, this miserable pittance of one of the advanced guards or outposts of the Church need only to be known to receive speedy augmentation. Another thing that should not be forgotten is, that there is a very large number of young English ladies continually arriving in Russia to seek employment as governesses in Russian families of distinction. I had the pleasure of meeting many of them at a friend's house, where one of their number has found a good husband and a happy home, and was very much gratified to hear from their own lips that the mode in which they are treated by the Russian noblesse with whom they reside leaves nothing to be desired. Their salaries are liberal, and their appointments everything that befits ladies of birth and education ; but, more than all this, they value the kind unostentatious footing of equality on which they stand with their patrons and pupils : an honoured guest at all their balls and parties, and included as a matter of course in all the invitations they receive from their friends. One lady showed me a whole box of valuable presents she had received from her pupils, or their mamas, every one of which was inscribed with some little kindly sentiment ; but they were unanimous in declaring that their treatment in the Russian families is everything that could be expected by an Englishwoman, a gentlewoman, and a woman of education. I could not help thinking of the position of our poor governesses at home as I listened to these authentic details of the homage paid to cultivated intellect by a people whom we so often flippantly set down as semi-barbarians.

But, then, to return to our muttons : in the natural

course of affairs these ladies will sometimes be out of employment, or will have to wait some time after their arrival in Russia before they can obtain suitable appointments. To all the poor girls so situated Mr. Grey is, in virtue of his sacred office, the natural father and protector; and well and faithfully does he discharge the duty. Let, then, all those who properly estimate the value of such a protector to a young English girl at a distance of two thousand miles from home, put their heads together and hit upon some plan by which the parson's ever-open hand may be better furnished with the means of helping his exiled countrymen and women.

The following interesting particulars respecting the English, and their church in Moscow, were obligingly furnished to me by Mr. Grey himself. I will only add, what his modesty forbids him to insert, namely, that the duties of minister at the British chapel in Moscow, were never more efficiently performed than during his own incumbency.

In 1553, Archangel was discovered by the English. In 1554, a treaty was concluded with the then Tzar, John IVth, which allowed them to build churches in any part of his dominions. The English, at that time, traded from Archangel during the summer months, and during the winter resided at Moscow, where their families remained always. The English factory, containing the church, was first established in a part of the old town of Moscow, called the Nicholski, and the house, which was taken from the English on the death of Charles I., still retains the English coat of arms emblazoned over its principal gate. On the restoration of Charles II., the English were restored to favour and another church was built. Under Michael IV., in 1629, a church was built in the German quarter. And the English continued to have a separate church until 1714, when Peter the Great ordered the removal of the English factory to St. Petersburg. At that time, in consequence of their diminished number, the English residents found it convenient to join with

the Dutch congregation, and the congregations continued joined until 1812, when Dr. Beresford was their chaplain. In 1812, the church was burned, but Dr. Beresford being tutor to the late Emperor Nicholas he easily obtained a grant of 40,000 roubles, paper, for the rebuilding of the church.

Through an error in making out this grant, through a subsequent error of the then churchwardens in lodging the money in the Foundling Hospital Bank, and through a false calculation of the expenses of building, this money was all lost. A dispute next arose between the Dutch Reformed and English congregations, which ended in their separation, and with loss of their building, which was partly finished ; and, in fine, the English congregation ceased to attend any religious service of their own, except the occasional assistance of a passing clergyman might be secured. This lamentable state of things existed for thirteen years, during which time many efforts were made to raise money sufficient to secure the services of a regular clergyman. In 1825, through the joint exertions of Mr. Boulton and Mr. Law, a grant was made by the Russian Company, another by the factory at St. Petersburg. A large subscription was raised both in Moscow and St. Petersburg, and at last the present building was bought and arranged, and a chaplain appointed on the same footing as at present. From this short summary it appears that the church at Moscow was the first English church in Russia, and that it continued uninterruptedly open from 1554 to the present time, except during the protectorate of Cromwell, and when, through the burning of Moscow, and the loss of the building and money, the efforts of the congregation were partly paralysed, yet this chapel is the only one which does not receive a regular support from the shipping dues. The building is much too small for its present purpose, as there are two schools attached to it in which there have been as many as seventy children.

It would not be right to close this historical review,

without referring to the late, but most important addition of a school for the English, by Mr. Grenside. Former chaplains, though they may have seen the want as clearly as he did, had not the moral courage to meet the wants of the community in this respect. Mr. Grenside, though labouring under very delicate health for some years, persevered steadily in this laudable work, until the school grew under his fostering care to a state of considerable efficiency. Its present numbers are seventy. It is self-supporting, and affords the means of educating many orphans, at an almost nominal expense, whilst others of the poor English children are given instruction wholly without payment. There are at present eight poor orphans on the books.

From the English church to the Russian "Traktir" may seem rather an odd transition, but a special correspondent writes against time, and must be permitted some licence in the choice of his subjects. Pious people will like to hear about the church, but jovial people will also like to hear something about the places of entertainment. The Russian tavern is called a "Traktir," of which there are few genuine specimens out of Moscow, the St. Petersburg houses having long since followed the French model. The Traktir which I visited, and which is one of the best in Moscow, is situated opposite the Kremlin garden, and was to me a real harbour of refuge on the day of the public entry. I had heard a good deal of the dirt and barbarism of these places, and knew that some English visitors had condemned them in no unmeasured terms. I was therefore anxious to judge for myself, and whether it was through the excellent appetite which my previous exertions had created, or that I am naturally the reverse of fastidious, I found the fare excellent, and in the attendance and arrangements nothing to be complained of. The first thing that struck me on entering the room was that the Russians are rather partial to smoking, as every one had either a pipe or cigar, and those who had not were waiting on the little

boy whose pleasant duty it was to get up the steam by lighting at the brazier and taking the first puff himself. As soon as my eye got a little accustomed to the smoky atmosphere, I could see that the room was crowded with officers, citizens, Tartars, and Circassians, and that every one in addition to the pipe had a plate of savoury odour, and a bottle of wine or beer before him. The place was not particularly clean, certainly—no place can be where smoking is permitted—but it was as certainly not particularly dirty, and the officers scattered about everywhere in brilliant uniforms appeared to be very well satisfied. The head waiter was a gigantic Russ, with long fair well-brushed hair descending in curls on his shoulders, and a magnificent beard that might have fitted the Farnese Hercules. He wore a shirt or tunic of crimson satin, open at the throat, and over it another of fine linen, and the remainder of his costume was in keeping; Russian boots of the finest kid, over which his black velvet trousers bulged, and festooned at the knee, completed a dress, which, to my eye, was both striking and characteristic. In the centre of the misty room stood this tremendous-looking fellow, like Woden, "god of Saxons," and every time he waved his potent napkin a score of white familiars might be seen flitting through the smoke to take the orders of the visitors. I had heard of Sterlitz soup, and having determined to taste that famous Russian dainty, an active youth in spotless white habiliments was not long in giving me the opportunity. It is made of certain portions of the sturgeon of the Volga, and is certainly deserving of a place beside the turtle-soup of the Albion, and the *Bisque d'Ecrévisse* of the Trois Frères. Every country, says Carême, has one good dish, we must put down Sterlitz soup as the Russian *Cheval de Bataille*. It must not be supposed that I had made sufficient progress in the Russian language to call for this delicacy myself, but I had for my next neighbour at the small table at which I sat, a young Russian officer of artillery, and, as is invariably the case,

with these gentlemen in similar circumstances, he undertook to be my interpreter with the waiter. While we sat and waited we were joined by an Englishman who had gone through tremendous exertions in the crowd of the morning. His motto, as he told us, was "When in Rome to do as Rome does," and accordingly he had taken every pains to deserve the character of an Anglo-mujik. On his first arrival, he had made himself ill drinking quass, which must have been to him what the doctor's soup was to Pallet in the banquet after the manner of the ancients, in Peregrine Pickle, and next he made himself nearly drunk with vodka, because he had been informed that it was the natural beverage of the country; lastly, that he might be pure Slavonic and no mistake, he had purchased a tremendous sheepskin coat, that weighed about four or five stone, and flourished, or rather staggered, about in it with the thermometer at about 90° in the shade. It should be observed that these coats, which are most excellent for the purpose intended, are only worn by the mujiks, and serve them at once for clothing, bed, and very often for lodging. When new they have a tremendous animal odour, so it may be imagined what effect our friend's arrival produced in a close room, and amongst a company of young officers bedizened in silver and gold. But our friend was perfectly indifferent; he was in Rome and would do as Rome did, therefore he stuck to his quass and vodka, clung to his sheepskin, and even allowed the boy to take the first whiff at his pipe, although the expression of his face while this preliminary was going on showed how severe was the self-inflicted martyrdom. He was not five minutes at table when he bluntly asked the young officer if it were true that the Russians liked the French better than the English, and the answer, which I give almost verbatim, is I think worth preserving: "I cannot say how it may be amongst civilians, but I know that in the Crimea, the French officers were at first (principally on account of their language) on the more familiar terms

with us. But we soon found out that many of them, especially in the line regiments, were illiterate men, and almost always of inferior birth [he used a still stronger expression], while the English officers were all gentlemen like ourselves, as you know that Russian officers are all selected from the ranks of the noblesse." The Anglo-mujik was perfectly delighted with this answer, and immediately proposed standing a bottle of Clicquot, which, however, our young Russian friend politely declined. Chatting freely in this way, I spent an hour very pleasantly in the Traktir, which I do not think deserves the hard things that have been said about it. Apropos of these adverse criticisms, I shall finish my letter with an anecdote, for the correctness of which I can vouch. A Russian officer of high rank was recently reading in a café some severe strictures quoted in Galignani, upon the Russian Traktir. "Well," he said at last, at the same time laying down his spectacles, "this may be all true, but the Prince of Prussia and the Grand Duke Constantine dined the other day at a Traktir, and they must know something about the luxuries and usages of civilised life. It is rather strange then that what satisfied Grand Dukes and heirs-apparent should not come up to the notions of these gentlemen."

LETTER XXIII.

(NOT BEFORE PUBLISHED.)

THE MOSCOW RAILWAY.—THE PASSPORTS.—THE POLITE GENTLEMAN AT COUNT ORLOFF'S.—WAIFS AND STRAYS.—THE MERCHANTS' DINNER.—THE SERFS.—POOR SKAIFFE'S STORY.—DEPARTURE.

—♦—
ST. PETERSBURG, Oct. 6.

PERHAPS you remember—I do, most vividly—the dangers and difficulties of my first journey on the Moscow railway, when all the world was, like myself,

going to see the coronation. Now, all the world is coming away, but the excitement is over ; a day more or less makes little difference : and so, when I made my appearance at the terminus yesterday morning, and tendered my money submissively to the distinguished general covered with orders who presides in the money-takers' department, everything passed off in the most leisurely manner, and I had ample time and room to take off my hat to the half-dozen gentlemen through whose hands I had to pass before I took my seat in the train, in that easy and graceful style which I trust gives general satisfaction. Through the indefatigable exertions of Monsieur Chollet, who might be seen any day for a week before my departure, rushing up to me every five minutes in the most mysterious manner, with a tremendous paper in one hand and a pen in the other, and insisting on my signing columns of the most perilous-looking hieroglyphics—I cannot tell, this minute, whether I am not bound in heavy penalties to pay his rent and taxes for the next ten years—I had obtained the Czar's permission to leave Moscow, always provided that Chollet gave a satisfactory account of my financial arrangements. The document was really something awful to look at, with the double-headed eagle at the top ; then four or five lines of Russian capitals ; then twenty or thirty of equally intelligible Russian writing ; then seals and stamps and signatures, and an instruction to "turn over ;" when, on the other side was a most detailed description of my personal peculiarities. In short, it looked as if it must have required the whole official strength of all the government departments to bring it to its present state of maturity ; and I really began to think myself a person of some consequence, that my going or staying in Moscow should be a matter of such importance to the Imperial cabinet. This delusion was very much strengthened by the manner of Chollet while the pass question was in course of negotiation. True, he did not say much ; but he winked and shrugged a great deal, and alluded mysteriously to the

Isle of Serpents and the Bolgrod difficulty, which were affecting official people in all sorts of ways whenever the business of an Englishman was in hand. One day, Prince Koff was taking his siesta when his signature was wanted, and to disturb him would have been the Mines for life. On another, Count Choff was at the chasse, and to enquire in anything like a pointed manner when he'd return might expose you to the surveillance of the secret police. Then there was General Stoi to be propitiated, and Colonel Skoi to be placated ; until at last, when the completed document was presented to my longing eyes, I clutched it with the eagerness of the gallant officer in the third act of the melodrama, who is just going to be shot by a file of those veterans who are the pride and glory of our stage, when Mr. Stuart or some other professor of the heavy business rushes up from the back scenes with his pardon in his hand. I felt myself a new man as I gazed on the splendid engraving of the double-headed eagle, that triumph of Russian art that fills the whole top of the paper. I made Chollet point out to me which was the signature of Choff, and which the indispensable sign-manual of Koff ; where Stoi had impressed his initials, and the corner in which the modest Skoi deposed to having seen the document. I have a horrid suspicion to this day that Chollet knew little more about it than myself, but made bold guesses, and fixed the rank of the signers according to the flourishes of the signatures. He believed in it all, however, most reverently : for I know he was incapable of wilful delusion.

But the best of the story is yet to come. After all these hopes and fears—Chollet's perspiring agonies and my own cruel suspense—a few roubles here and roubles there, in fees, fines, and douceurs, when I came to the railway pay-office this wonderful paper was never asked for at all ! I had jumped from my droschki bold as a lion, flashed my pass at the mounted gendarmes in the courtyard, and shook it in the face of the budishnik who

stood at the inner door. I approached the pay-table with my pass held aloft in one hand, my nineteen roubles in the other, and my hat between my teeth, when, to my great surprise, General-Adjutant Count Checktakeroff, who was covered with orders, entered the desk, clutched the money, and treated the much-prized and hardly-won pass with the most sublime indifference. From that day to the present it never was asked for, and I have it now as a curious souvenir of my Russian journey. This may all appear very strange, but it is capable of easy solution. The Emperor, who I have every reason to believe is one of the best disposed sovereigns that ever ascended the Russian throne, gave orders that strangers visiting Moscow during the coronation should have every facility of transit; but the Russian official system, besides being the most complex and over-manned, is the least efficient in the world. The communication between the different departments is exceedingly imperfect, so that one may be carrying on some new plan with tremendous vigour, while the other is pertinaciously adhering to the old forms. That was precisely the case with the passes and passports; the railway authorities had the proper instructions, but the other bureaus stuck to the old roundabout methods.

When my companion and I—I always fraternise with somebody on a journey—a lively and restless little Gaul, to whom it was a heavy punishment to be obliged to sit still for two minutes together, arrived at the train, we found plenty of room—very different from the upward journey—and immediately took possession of the saloon, in which my friend could pace up and down in the day-time, like a tiger in his den, and each of us could extemporise a bed when night came on. We got on very comfortably for the first twelve hours, and at night made everything snug; my friend building himself up like the nun in the wall, with fur cloaks, railway wrappers, and other travelling appendages, with which he was bountifully supplied. I also composed myself to slumber, and we were both I suppose happy dreaming of our respective

homes, when about midnight we were startled by a tremendous bustle, and on opening our eyes found our sanctum about to be invaded by a tremendous family party, consisting of a man, three females, a nurse, and a baby. The man piled bandboxes, trunks, and portmanteaus about the seats, reckless as to whom he incommoded; the ladies commenced chattering, as if they had been suffering the penalties of the silent system for the previous six months; while the nurse, a mild woman of about eighteen stone, plumped herself down on my friend's feet, and taking out a rattle, attempted with it to pacify the baby, who showed unequivocal symptoms of a dislike to railway travelling. In a moment our peaceful home was turned into a tower of Babel, and we felt as if we could immolate on the spot the man who could be the head of such an ill-regulated family. My friend first murmured, then growled, then exploded in a torrent of unexceptionable French, to which the Russ, who probably knew no language but his own, listened with commendable equanimity. What was to be done? We pondered, and narrowly scanned the enemy, who in an evil hour for himself was so absent as to pull out his railway ticket, which we saw was a red one, whereas we knew a first-class ticket should be green. My friend, like Wellington at Talavera, saw the weak point at once, and when we came to the next station laid his complaint at the feet of field-marshal the conductor. He tried him in French, then in German, but the stern official only shook his head. Then he appealed to the universal language of signs; gave a plump that nearly destroyed his equilibrium, to indicate the savage onslaught of the nurse; reckoned up the chattering ladies on his fingers; and finally, throwing himself into a maternal attitude, commenced nursing an imaginary baby with a playful vigour that was quite charming. His imitation of the squall and other infantile demonstrations was nature itself, and at once flashed conviction into the mind of the conductor. Suddenly this worthy found out that he could talk German, and he attempted to terrify my

friend by telling him that the intruders were some great Russian family, and that to disturb them would expose all concerned to the most imminent peril. But our little Gaul was not to be done ; he called me to his side, and describing me as some dreadfully influential American, swore that I was that moment meditating a personal memorial to the Emperor, to be presented by Colonel Seymour, laying bare the whole of our grievance. The conductor was evidently checkmated ; he scratched the small corner of his ear which his steel casque left uncovered, and rushing into the carriage, made a feeling address to the Russian party. The altercation rapidly grew hot, but was soon cut short by the abrupt retirement of the conductor, who in the twinkling of an eye returned with four terrible-looking gendarmes, and forcibly expelled the enemy, bag and baggage. I, who had quite enjoyed the whole affair, and was merely a looker-on, rather felt for the poor women and little baby, although it certainly had a vicious propensity for squalling. It was truly a mournful procession—a miniature of the flight of the Israelites out of Egypt—but when the party arrived on the platform the whole murder came out. The head of this worthy family had taken only *one* second-class ticket for the whole lot, and with the assistance of a few roubles to our friend the conductor, had obtained the privilege of thus filling the saloon of the first-class carriage. I was informed that such incidents are of regular occurrence on this admirably-managed line, and I commend this particular one to the attention of the authorities, when they are next investigating the reasons why it pays no dividends.

But the whole system of railway management in this country is as puerile as it is vexatious. During the height of the coronation fever, the ordinary one train a day was found wholly inefficient to accommodate the enormous influx of passengers ; and accordingly the Emperor ordered a second train to be put on. No sooner was this done, than all the lazy people determined

to wait for the second train, and the consequence was, that one fine day there were sixty vacant places in the first. This made his excellency the general who represents Captain Huish in Russia so wroth, that he at once countermanded the second train; and at two o'clock the terminus might be seen surrounded by about a thousand distracted persons of all nations, sitting disconsolate on piles of carpet-bags and portmanteaus, like Marius amid the ruins of Carthage. The sapient general had, by his masterly manœuvre, punished the sixty lazy people who were not up to time, in the persons of the thousand who had had nothing whatever to do with their misconduct.

My first business on arriving in St. Petersburg was to pay my respects to the mysterious gentleman in the bureau of the secret police, universally known to strangers in Russia as "The polite gentleman at Count Orloff's."* I have asked his name from dozens of people, but never could get any reply other than a mysterious, terrified shake of the head, and a friendly caution not to be too curious. For my own part, I never could see anything very terrible in this much-dreaded personage. I have heard stories about his committing men to prison for coughing in the ante-room, and with his own hand bonnetting an Englishman who so far forgot himself as not to take off his hat in the imperial chancellerie. A Frenchman came to me one day with tears in his eyes, and told me that "the polite gentleman" had rebuked him for a similar offence, by reminding him that he was now not in France, but in Russia; thereby intimating that the polished nation *par excellence* must come to the north to learn manners. But, to me, "the polite gentleman" was always polite, even friendly. When I came to him first, he gave me an early turn, and almost petrified with a look a German who, having waited a couple of hours, was absurd enough to grumble. He inquired, in

* Now Prince Dolgorouki's.

accents of almost personal interest, where I was born, what was my profession, and, above all, what was my object in coming to Russia—by the way, a general question with the Russians, who seem never to dream that any one would be mad enough to visit their country for amusement. For themselves, they get out of it as soon as they can, and never return until they can't help it, nor even speak their own language, except to their servants, while they speak others so fluently that they can pass for natives of any country in Europe. On my return from Moscow, "the polite gentleman" recognised me at once, and his eyes sparkled with delight as I recounted to him the splendours of the coronation. When I told him of the Kremlin ball, with its twenty-five thousand invitations, he exclaimed, "Ah, you could never see that anywhere but in Russia! Twenty-five thousand people! The population of a German capital city." He did my business with the most marvellous celerity, and gave me one or two directions which enabled me to get in a few hours the permission to depart, which other people complained cost them whole weeks of trouble. Finally, he rose from his chair, shook hands with me in the most friendly manner, and wished me a prosperous journey, and I parted from him impressed with the idea that he was a true patriotic Russian, a capital man of business, and, although surrounded by an atmosphere of bribery, perfectly inaccessible to corruption.

On my arrival in Petersburg, one of the first things I heard of was the dinner given in Moscow by M. Kokoref, and the wonderful speech he made to the mujik merchants. This recalled to my recollection the merchants' dinner at the riding-school, and the rumours there prevalent of the scurvy way in which the hosts were treated by Count Zagrewsky, the Governor of Moscow. At the time, I alluded to it in the slightest possible manner, because, although inundated with stories from the aggrieved parties, I had not time or means of ascertaining their correctness; and I knew too well that in Russia,

where there are so few newspapers, the most absurd and false reports are constantly flying about. But as there is no smoke without fire, I have come to the conclusion that there was a true foundation for the complaints there made, and I believe the facts to be nearly as follow. During the great fair of Novogorod, a merchant of the first guild, who was there from Moscow on business, was one evening enjoying himself at a Traktir, and, forgetful of the police regulations, ventured out on the platform in front of the house to smoke his segar. A policeman coming up, ordered him peremptorily to put it out ; but the merchant, who had taken a glass of wine, as peremptorily refused ; whereupon the budishnick knocked him down. The merchant picked himself up in violent indignation, called his Isvodstchik, and drove off to the house of the Governor to complain. The Governor was at the theatre, whither the merchant, still boiling over, followed him, and sent in such an urgent message, that his Excellency hurried out to see what could possibly be the matter. The merchant made his complaint, expecting instant satisfaction ; but the Governor, finding that it was only a merchant of the first guild, who had been knocked down by a policeman, was so angry that he should be disturbed in the middle of the play for such an insignificant cause, that he gave the poor merchant a smart box on the ear, and sent him about his business. I believe he sent for him the next morning, pleaded vinous excitement, and made an apology ; but the story soon reached Moscow, and when the merchants there got an intimation from Count Zagrewsky that they were expected to give the officers and soldiers a grand dinner, they grumbled about the Novogorod affair, and, at last, were only hospitable on compulsion. A soreness was thus created in the mind of the Governor, who is a regular old soldier ; and so when he saw them mustering strong in the riding-school, on the day of the dinner, he ordered a lot of them out ; on the ground, which was certainly not unreasonable, that if the hosts took up all the seats, there

would be no room for the guests, to the number of four thousand, who had been invited. But all the first men remained ; and the Golova, or Lord Mayor of Moscow, sat at the Emperor's own table, and proposed the Emperor's health, while numbers of the leading men stood at the head of the *haie* which was formed when he rose to depart. I think I can call to mind somewhat parallel cases nearer home, where certain civic banquets being given to illustrious personages, the hosts waxed so numerous as to leave the guests hardly room to dance, or even sit down. Let us, then, think of the beam, &c.

But here come the immense advantages of the publicity which in England is prized as the palladium of national liberty. There were then in Moscow special correspondents from the principal European papers, and such a story was sure to get wind. It was felt that something wrong had been done, and, what was worse, that the world would soon find it out. Hence, ever since, every one in power has been polite to the merchants, and M. Kokoref was evidently "put up" to show how eloquent, how patriotic, and in what high social positions are the Russian merchants. But it must be remembered that M. Kokoref is one of the men who make large fortunes by farming the brandy monopoly from the government, and is therefore as much an official as if he prefixed General to his name, and had his breast covered with stars and crosses. Further, I would rather have heard the fine sentiments attributed to him from a man who came into court with cleaner hands ; for, be it remembered, that if there is one thing more than another that brutifies and keeps down the poor mujik, it is this very brandy monopoly, which makes it the interest of men like M. Kokoref to encourage habits of intoxication by every means in their power. The dreadful stuff called Vodka is forced upon the poor peasant in all sorts of ways, direct and indirect ; and his only alternative is to be a drunkard or a marked man with all the petty officials, who have only too much power to persecute him. But

never mind, if the speech of M. Kokoref be not a faith-worthy expression of true principles, it is a tardy recognition of their value, and that recognition is the first step, although still a great way off, towards their general adoption.

M. Kokoref, and the merchants, and the mujiks, brings this, my last, long, rambling letter round to a subject which, as a traveller in Russia, I cannot altogether ignore ; although the shortness of my visit, and my few opportunities for observation, must necessarily render what I have to say loose and hesitating. I am not one of those who would plunge recklessly into a country, fly over it in railway-trains for a few weeks, and then think myself competent to speak dogmatically on its statistics, politics, religion, and social institutions. Still, the institution of serfdom is so exceptional in a country which professes to be one of the civilised nations of Europe, that it naturally provokes some observation from even the most careless traveller. It is certainly, above everything and before everything, the great ulcer and plague-spot of Russia, as slavery is that of America, retarding her progress in civilisation, preventing the development of her vast physical resources, tying up the hands of her government, demoralising her *noblesse*, and brutalising her naturally amiable and improveable people. During my sojourn in this country, I have seen every day and every hour proofs of the wretched results of this slightly diluted slavery ; but fairness obliges me to add, more than one indication that the question has begun seriously to stir the public mind, and that the governing powers have at length taken it into their serious consideration. As a straw thrown up shows the way the wind sets, I accept, as a hopeful omen, the rumour that prevailed in Petersburg and Moscow, for many days previous to the coronation, that the Czar intended to signalise his solemn investiture with the imperial crown by some grand and comprehensive step in the direction of emancipation. I did not believe it, I must confess ; but it showed what

was the public feeling as to what ought to be done ; and therefore I was delighted to hear repeated confidently, in every quarter, that on the day of the coronation, Alexander the Second was to issue an ukase ordering that every child born in Russia from that day forward should be free, no matter whether his or her parents were or were not serfs.

The coronation came and passed away, and, just as I expected, no ukase ; but still the gossip was kept up, and during the whole time that has elapsed since, I have found that the two questions of serfdom and emancipation are the most engrossing topics with every Russian possessed of the slightest spark of intelligence. It has struck me as another hopeful symptom—and, also, as a thing rather curious in itself—that every one here talks of the poor mujik as “our people,” “our peasants,” or some other respectable substitute for the name which ought to burn the lips of whoever uttered it with acceptance or approval.

I have discussed the question with very charming young ladies, with very fierce-looking military and naval officers, and with intelligent and well-to-do merchants. I have found nobody afraid of it, every one wishing for change ; but what has most surprised me was that amongst the gentle daughters of Eve were to be found the most reluctant abolitionists. But one thing—and it is an immense step in the right direction—is universally admitted, viz., that something must be done to settle the question before Russia again attempts to play the dictator or arbitrator beyond her own frontier. There seems to me to be a dark undefined dread pervading all the governing classes, that sooner or later a ruthless Jacques Bonhomme will rise up in Russia, and marshalling the huge mujik population with some talismanic word wreak a terrible vengeance for the tyranny and oppressions of centuries. And some premonitory symptoms of such a state of things have already appeared—but more of this lower down. It is very probable that, as with ma

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other topics of Russian politics with the *names* of which our quidnuncs play with great familiarity, the real state of the serf question is very little understood in England. I am informed by the apologists for the institution—it has no vindicators in Russia—that the peasants were first made *adscripti glebæ* by Boris Gudunoff the Usurper, to check the nomadic habits that had up to his time prevailed amongst them. This man, among many faults, had some good qualities, and was far in advance of his time in governing faculty and statesmanlike turn of thought. He found the tribes of which the Muscovite people was composed squatting rather than living on the land, stopping in one place until they had eaten up everything eatable, and then wandering off, Heaven knew where, in search of new pasture, so that he might one day look at his map and point to a populous province, or government, as they are called, and the next find that the very same place was a howling wilderness, given over to the wolves and bears. He knew that while this wandering was permitted, no civilisation could go on, and therefore, having ascertained who and how many were living in certain places on a certain day, he issued an ukase fixing them to the spot, making them serfs of the boyard to whom the land belonged, and furnishing each with a code of the reciprocal duties which the government expected each to discharge towards the other, or to the state.

The master was to give the serf home, land, and protection, and to store up in abundant years for times of famine, so that his people might not want, or become a burden to the state. In return for this, the serf was bound to give his master *two* days' work out of the six that formed the working week, not to leave the land without his permission, and when he did leave it to seek his fortune elsewhere, to pay his master an annual percentage, not more *pro rata* than our income tax, upon his earnings. This would not appear a hard bondage for a simple and half savage peasantry, but in every year that has elapsed since the time of Boris the condition of the

serf has been growing worse, the exactions of the master becoming greater, and the cries of oppression and hardship more and more heartrending. Instead of two days to the master, the poor mujik has now only two for himself, he is in constant dread of being sent off to the army or the mines for the slightest offence, his wife and daughter are at the mercy of the brutal intendant, who in so many cases supplies the place of an absent lord, and if he make any appeal to the judicial tribunals of the country he is laughed at for his pains; the intendant bribes the judge before his face, and when he returns to the estates heaps ten times more ill-usage on him than ever he had suffered before.

None but an eye-witness could realise the treatment to which the poor mujik is obliged to submit. On one occasion, a friend of mine whom I believe to be incapable of saying the thing that was not, visited a landed proprietor near Moscow, who, as boyards go, is by no means a bad master, but still he indulges in the luxury of the freeborn Yankee in rather an energetic manner. While he and my friend were sipping a glass of undeniable Clicquot—these boyards are princes in hospitality,—a deputation of his peasants were ushered into the saloon to tell him of some misfortune that had happened to the village—a hen-roost blown down, or something of that sort. The head of the deputation was a venerable-looking old man, such as Rembrandt would have delighted to paint, and as he told his simple story and made his simple apology his appearance was quite patriarchal. But whatever was the misfortune, it so excited the ire of his master, a man in the prime of life, that he grasped the old man by the silver hair that flowed majestically down the side of his head, dashed him upon the ground, and commenced kicking him with ungovernable fury. Not one of the group, two sons amongst the rest, stirred a limb, and the poor victim himself only sought to kiss the foot whose mission seemed to be to kick his brains out. My friend being rather unaccustomed to this sort of thing, sprung

from his much-beloved Clicquot and drew off the fury. The boyard submitted with a good grace—the Russian gentry are models of politeness—but seemed to think that the stranger's objection to his little escapade arose from that singular crotchety turn of mind that obtains for Englishmen the reputation of being a little “cracked” all over the continent. He averred that a thrashing was the only thing a mujik understood, and that the most severe and harsh masters were universally the most beloved by their serfs. The Englishman quoted the proverb—

A woman, a spaniel, a walnut tree,
The more they're beaten the better they'll be,

with which his host was hugely delighted, and, substituting the word “mujik” for “spaniel,” at once inserted the lines in his common-place book.

But everything, even mujik endurance, has its limits. I was informed that shortly before my arrival in Russia, a dreadful tragedy had occurred at a village about a hundred miles south of the holy city. A young boyard, when starting on a journey, left a favourite greyhound in the safe keeping of a boy, one of his father's serfs. On his return he found his dog lame, and making enquiry, learned that the accident had occurred through some negligence on the part of the poor boy. Stung to fury by the misfortune of his much-prized dog, he summoned the luckless lad into his presence, and having reproached him for his crime, set his whole pack of dogs upon him, and let them tear him to pieces in the saloon. The boy's father, who had been cutting wood in a neighbouring forest, hearing the cries, rushed into the house, axe in hand, and on seeing the mangled and still quivering body of his son, at once forgot all his habits of abject servility, rushed upon the young tyrant, and clove his skull open with the axe. The poor man immediately delivered himself up to justice, but whether owing to the excitement which the offence had caused amongst the mujiks, or the extremity of his provocation, he was

merely sent to a monastery to spend the remainder of his days in quietness and comfort.

But every question has two sides, and I have also heard some dark stories, about the thievish propensities of the mujiks, and the sanguinary revenge they sometimes take, when any man placed over them in authority attempts a reform. The story of poor Skaiffe, Prince Galatzin's English jockey, is in everyone's mouth here. The Prince, who is or was a great amateur in turf matters, brought Skaiffe over from England at a large salary to superintend his racing stud. Our countryman went about his work vigorously, as most Englishmen do, and soon made short work with the neglect, plunder, and corruption that he found to be universal amongst his master's mujik servants. He won golden opinions from the gentlemen, rose rapidly, and rode his own horses, with which he won several valuable prizes. But the snake was scotched, not killed, the mujiks were only biding their time, and it came at last, in the evening before the day when Skaiffe was to ride his favourite English horse for a prize cup filled with golden eagles. He had retired early to bed in order that he might be fresh for the work of the next morning, but had not been more than an hour in bed, when one of the stable-boys rushed into his room in apparent alarm, and told him that the pet horse was in convulsions. Skaiffe hastily drew on his trousers, and thus half-dressed, rushed out to the stable, which was at some distance from the house. He was never seen again alive, but the next morning his dead body was found dangling from a tree in the coppice which sheltered the stables from the north wind. His master, and, in fact, all the sporting nobility of Russia, with whom he had been a great favourite, were deeply shocked, and made the most strenuous efforts to discover the offender, but the result of their exertions was never known, as the system here is secrecy in everything, even the administration of justice.

Such is the system which hangs like a millstone round

the neck of Russia, and ties her hands when she dreams of foreign aggression. The whole atmosphere of the vast empire is laden with dread whispers of a mujik insurrection. Nobody knows whence they come or who is the author, but they exist, and create fear and trembling in high places. Should such an insurrection indeed break out, God help the *noblesse*; nothing that we have ever read of, of Jacquerie, of French revolution, of St. Domingo, of Gallicia, so near home, could compare for a moment with the scenes which a universal outbreak of long pent-up mujik vengeance would produce in the wide dominions of the Czar.

I have now completely emptied my budget of all my Russian anecdotes, and have exhausted my small reflective powers in the accompanying comments. I have nothing more left to do, but pack up, pay my little bill, join my worthy friend Captain Kröger, in his tight little "Dampschiff," Neva, and make the best of my way back to Old England, which, although not boasting so large an army, nor such a profusion of pearls and diamonds as Russia, has still a few substantial, although perhaps commonplace, advantages which are not altogether to be despised.

APPENDIX.

THE PROGRAMME.

CEREMONIAL CONFIRMED BY HIS MAJESTY THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER NICOLAIEWITCH, AUTOCRAT OF ALL THE RUSSIAS, OF HIS SOLEMN ENTRY INTO THE CAPITAL OF MOSCOW, AND HIS CORONATION.

I.

SOLEMN ENTRY.

ON the day appointed by his Majesty for the procession from the Petrofsky Palace to Moscow, at a signal given by nineteen guns from the vicinity of the Tchoudof monastery, when Mass is commenced at the great cathedral of the Assumption, the troops will form in the places assigned to them. The officials belonging to the Court will also assemble according to their rank, his Majesty will mount on horseback, and the Empress with the Imperial Family will take their seats in the carriages, the procession forming in the following order:—

The chief of the police with twelve gendarmes on horseback, two and two.

The special escort of his Imperial Majesty.

A squadron of the Black Sea Cossacks of the guard.

The principal nobles on horseback in uniform, two and two, with the Marshal of the Nobility of the district of Moscow.

The Asiatic representatives and those of the various nations subject to Russia on horseback, two and two.

The chief officer of the palace on horseback, with sixty court servants, six grooms of the chamber, six runners, two and two, on foot.

The imperial huntsmen on horseback, twenty jägers on foot, two and two, in state liveries.

Two masters of ceremonies in an open phäeton, with their insignia.

The grand master of the ceremonies in an open phäeton drawn by six horses.

Twenty-four under gentlemen of the chamber on horseback, two and two, preceded by an M.C. also on horseback.

Twelve gentlemen of the chamber on horseback, two and two, preceded by an M.C. also on horseback.

Officers of the stable and two grooms on horseback.

Officers of the court of the second rank in gilded carriages.

The court marshal in an open carriage, with his insignia.

Officers of the court of the first rank, in gilded carriages.

The members of the Imperial Council, in like carriages.

The chief court marshal in an open carriage, with a sceptre.

The imperial Horse Guards and mounted Life Guards.

HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY, on horseback, followed by the minister of the household, the minister of war, and a general and aide-de-camp of the imperial suite.

Their Imperial Highnesses the Heir Apparent Nicholas Alexandrovitch, the Grand Dukes Alexander, Constantine, Nicholai, and Michael, the Prince Romanoff Duke of Leuchtenberg, the Prince Peter of Oldenburg, and the foreign princes, on horseback.

The generals of various grades attached to the persons of his Majesty and their Imperial Highnesses.

The Empress Dowager in a gilded carriage surmounted by the imperial crown, and drawn by eight horses, each with a groom. On the right of the carriage, the chief equerry; on the left, the adjutant-general attached to her Majesty, on horseback; with two pages behind on the foot-board and four Cossacks of the chamber in state uniforms. Behind the carriage, six pages of the chamber and two grooms on horseback.

Her Majesty the Empress Marie Alexandrowna, with his Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovitch, in a carriage like the preceding, and similarly attended.

The Grand Duchesses Maria Pavlovna and Alexandra Josifovna, in state carriages, with mounted attendants.

The Grand Duchesses Alexandra Petrovna and Elena Pavlovna, in carriages similarly attended.

The Grand Duchesses Maria Nikolaevna and Ekaterina Michailovna.

Her Imperial Highness the Princess of Oldenburg. All in carriages similarly attended.

A squadron of the Cuirassiers of the Guard.

Ladies of the bedchamber and maids of honour of the Empress and Grand Duchesses.

Squadrons of the Hussars of the Guard and of the Lancers of the Guard.

The moment his Imperial Majesty enters the City of Moscow, a salvo of seventy-one guns will be fired, and his Excellency the Military Governor-General of Moscow, at the head of his subordinates, will receive his Majesty, and join the procession.

At the entrance of the quarter called the Zemliannoi Gorod, the functionaries of the Town Hall and magistrates will meet the procession.

At the quarter called the Bielvi Gorod, the Marshal of the Nobility of the government of Moscow, and the chief nobles will join.

At the Gate of the Resurrection, the Imperial Family will descend from their carriages and horses, to salute the image of the Virgin of Iversk, and the procession will halt until they remount.

At the Holy Gate, the Commandant of Moscow and his staff will receive the procession, and at the cathedral of the Assumption, the directing senate.

Along the line of the procession the various clergy will come out of the churches with images and crosses. The houses of the streets through which the cortége passes will be decorated by the inhabitants.

Their Majesties and their Imperial Highnesses, together with all those who follow them in the procession, will alight at the Krasnoe Kryltze.

Those who precede their Majesties in the procession will pass, without stopping, round the cathedral of the Assumption, and will descend from their carriages at the north gate, by which the members of the Council will enter the cathedral. The officers of the Court will proceed along the east side of the church, and place themselves at the south gate, where they will await the departure of his Majesty the Emperor.

The Holy Synod and the Clergy having previously sung, in the Cathedral of the Assumption, a *Te Deum* in thanksgiving for the safe arrival of his Majesty the Emperor, and prayed for the preservation of his life, will go to meet the imperial Family in the Court of the Cathedral, with the cross and holy water, and then precede them into the church, while the choristers sing a psalm from the second canticle.

By this time persons of distinction of both sexes will have assembled in the cathedral.

At the entry of their Majesties into the church, a salvo of eighty-five guns will be fired. Their Imperial Majesties, after having kissed the holy images and the relics, proceed, with the Metropolitan of Moscow before them, to the Cathedrals of the Archangel Michael and of the Annunciation, where also, before the arrival of their Majesties, a *Te Deum* will be sung. In the first of these cathedrals, their Majesties will be received by one of the Archbishops, and in the other by their Confessor. Having kissed the holy images and the relics in these cathedrals, and bowed themselves before the tombs of their ancestors in the Cathedral of the Archangel Michael, their Majesties will

proceed to the Palace of the Kremlin. Their Majesties will be accompanied to their apartments by the Court, in the order prescribed for ordinary Court solemnities.

Their Majesties, on their arrival at the Palace of the Kremlin, will be received by the Clergy of the Court, with the cross and the holy water, the Arch-Marshal of the Coronation, and the President and members of the *Comptoir du Palais* will present bread and salt to his Majesty the Emperor.

At this moment a salvo of 101 guns will be fired. The bells of the churches will ring throughout the day, and in the evening the city will be illuminated.

II.

PROCLAMATION OF THE CORONATION.

THE ceremony of the coronation will be solemnly announced to the people on the three previous days by a general adjutant having the rank of full general, two ditto, with the rank of major-general, two secretaries of the senate, two heralds, four court masters of the ceremonies, two secretaries of the senate with staffs of office, escorted by cavalry with full trumpet bands, all in state uniforms, and with 12 stud horses in state trappings with feathers.

On the first day, at nine a.m., they will assemble at the Kremlin, and the procession being marshalled, the heralds, at an order given by the General Commandant, will raise their batons, and at this signal, the rest will uncover, the trumpets will sound the call, and one of the secretaries will then, in a loud voice, read the following proclamation :—

“Our very august, high, and mighty Lord, the Emperor Alexander Nicolaevitch, having ascended the hereditary throne of his ancestors, that of all the Russias, and of the Kingdom of Poland and Grand Duchy of Finland, which are inseparable from it, has deigned to command that the coronation and consecration of his Imperial Majesty, and his holy anointing, shall take place on the 26th day of this present August, and that his august spouse, her Imperial Majesty, the Empress Maria Alexandrovna, shall take part in that holy ceremony. This solemn act is announced by the present proclamation to all his faithful subjects, in order that on that happy day they may redouble the fervour of their prayers to the King of Kings, that He may diffuse by His almighty power, His favours and His blessings over the reign of his Majesty; and that, while it lasts, he may maintain peace and tranquillity to the glory of

His holy name, and for the unalterable prosperity of the empire."

After the reading of this proclamation, the heralds distribute printed copies of it to the people and the trumpeters play the National hymn—"God save the Czar."

The procession will then go through the Holy Gate to the place called Krasnaïa, towards the monument of the Prince Pojarsky and of Minine.

Here the procession re-forms, reversing the detail, and with cavalry preceding it, the proclamation is read at the three other gates of the Kremlin, and at various places in the city, the procession dividing into two bodies for that purpose, the number of places where the proclamation is made being twelve on the first day, twelve on the second day, and eight on the third. In proceeding from one point to the other, the bands will play a march.

The announcement of the day of the coronation will be made to the various foreign ambassadors by the various masters of ceremonies, in state carriages.

III.

DECORATION OF THE CATHEDRAL OF THE ASSUMPTION.

A DAIS will be erected covered with crimson velvet, with ornaments of gilt metal and gold embroidery, with gold cords, tassels, and fringes; the lining will be of cloth of gold, the cornice of gilt carved work. At the corners of the cornice will be gilt imperial crowns, and in the middle of each side gilded eagles, and a carved ornament on the summit decorated with ostrich feathers of the imperial colours, and around the vallon will be wrought in coloured embroidery shields with his Majesty's name, surmounted by crowns. On the ceiling of the dais will be the arms of the empire in embroidery, with those of the kingdoms of Kazan, Astrakhan, Poland, Siberia, the Tauridan Chersonesus, and Georgia, and of the provinces and grand duchies of Kief, Vladimir, Novogorod, and Finland, of the ancestors and predecessors of his Majesty, with the imperial titles. At the corners of the ceiling will be the cipher of his Majesty surmounted by a crown, and surrounded by the collar of the Order of St. Andrew. Beneath the dais the throne will be raised on twelve steps, covered with crimson velvet, bordered with gold lace, the steps being divided into two series by a broader landing-place or platform. Around the throne and by the steps will be a low gilded balustrade, and at the top and bottom of the steps, gilded eagles. The throne of the Czar

John III. will be placed for the Emperor, that of the Czar Michael Feodorovitch for the Empress, and on the left will be the table for the regalia, all covered with crimson velvet and gold cloth, and edged with gold lace.

On the right of these thrones will be placed that of the Czar Alexis Mikhailovitch, for the Empress Dowager, under a canopy of crimson velvet, and the curtains of cloth of gold will be embroidered with imperial crowns; ostrich feathers of the imperial colours will be at the corners. In the middle of each side of the vallon will be her Majesty's cipher, surrounded by the collar of St. Andrew, and gilded eagles will be at each corner. The ceiling of crimson velvet will be embroidered with small imperial shields, and at the corners the imperial ciphers, as on the vallon.

The place which his Imperial Majesty usually occupies in the cathedral will be enclosed by hangings of crimson velvet, with gold lace, and lined with cloth of gold, strewn with imperial crowns.

The two columns of the cathedral between which the throne stands will be draped with crimson velvet covered with golden eagles, to the height of the dais.

At the other two columns, on the right side, will be the place appropriated to the illustrious guests, with a special access, guarded by a gilded balustrade. It will be covered with crimson velvet, as will also a somewhat lower estrade for guests of lower rank.

Against the inner wall of the cathedral will be placed the foreign ambassadors and their ladies, the ladies of the court, and others, the gallery being covered with scarlet cloth, ornamented with gold lace and gilded fillets; the gallery for the priests and singers will be similarly decorated, and erected near the altar. Without the church, on the side towards the belfry of Ivan Velikoi, will be a gallery of spectators, covered with crimson cloth.

IV.

THE CORONATION CEREMONY.

ON the eve of the day appointed for the solemnisation of the crowning, at four in the afternoon, on the ringing of the bells, a *Te Deum* will be sung in all the churches, and will be continued during the night. Their Majesties, with the Imperial Family, will attend service in the church of our Saviour, behind the golden gates; the prayers will be those customary at coronations.

On the day of the coronation, at seven in the morning, a signal will be given by twenty-one guns from the walls of the Kremlin, at the commencement of service in the Cathedral of the Assumption; the persons whose duty it is to do so will assemble and conduct the guests, and ambassadors and their ladies, to the places assigned to them in the cathedral as indicated on their tickets. The whole line of the procession from the throne room in the Alexandrofskoi Palace will be hung with tapestry, and the line kept by the Grenadiers of the Palace from the throne-room to the doors of the palace, and by various other troops to the doors of the cathedral, all with their flags and standards. Two superior officers of the Horse Guards will stand on the fifth step of the throne, two juniors on the seventh with drawn swords, and their helmets in their hands. At the northern and southern doors of the cathedral, and within it, will be placed two under-officers of the same regiment, with drawn swords, and their helmets in their hands.

On the same morning the regalia will be brought from the Treasure Palace to the throne-room, with great ceremony, and will consist of the collar and star of the order of St. Andrew, the imperial banner, seal, sword, robes, crowns, sceptres, and orb, each brought on a cushion, guarded by the Grenadiers of the Palace, and will be received at various points by officials appointed for that purpose, until the procession reaches the throne-room of the Alexandrofskoi Palace, when the High Marshal will take each article and place it on the appointed table on the left-hand side of the throne, erecting the imperial standard in its appropriate socket, the whole being guarded by the Grenadiers of the Palace.

In the mean time prayers will be offered up at the Cathedral, for the well-being of his Majesty, and the clergy will form their processions to accompany the Emperor and Empress, and sixteen staff-officers will take to the Krasnoi portico the canopy prepared for the Empress Dowager, made of cloth of gold supported by gilded staves, and covered with the imperial cipher and crowns.

When her Majesty is informed that the canopy is ready, she will proceed, wearing the crown and robes, accompanied by her two assistants and the heir-apparent, and those of the imperial family not in attendance on the Emperor and Empress, together with the foreign princes, and a cortége of grandees, ladies, and officials to the door of the cathedral, where she will be met by the clergy, with their crosses and holy water.

On entering the cathedral she will take her place on the throne, the high personages in waiting taking their places on the right, and the train bearers standing behind the throne, between the columns.

When his Majesty is about to proceed to the cathedral, one of the proto-presbyters, with two deacons, bearing the holy water on a golden salver, will sprinkle the track of the procession, and thirty-two staff-officers will carry the canopy to the Krasnoi portico. The canopy is similar to that of the Empress Dowager's, but decorated with coloured ostrich feathers, and with the arms of the different kingdoms and governments. When the grand master of the ceremonies announces that all is ready, their Majesties being seated in the throne-room beneath the dais, the procession will form in the following order to the sound of trumpets and cymbals.

A squadron of Horse Guards, with two officers, who, on arriving at the church, will take their places on either side of the porch, and, after the procession has entered, will then take a similar position at the north door.

Twenty-four pages and a like number of grooms of the chamber, who will wait until the conclusion of the ceremony in the Palace of the Holy Synod.

Two masters of ceremonies with wands, who will stand on the lowest step of the throne.

A deputation of the chiefs of the crown peasants, one from each government; these will be followed by similar deputations from the foreign merchants, the council and magistrates of the city, the council of manufactures, the customs, the medical board, the mine corps, and all the other government establishments. The greater proportion of these will wait the conclusion of the ceremony in the Palace of the Synod.

Then follows a deputation from the Cossack army, the officials of the various governments and kingdoms, the chief officers of the senate, two masters of ceremonies with wands, the grand master of ceremonies with wand, two heralds, and then the regalia, borne as before described. A squadron of Horse Guards, the court marshal, the upper and chief court marshals, and then the Emperor and Empress, with two assistants on either side, and the great ministers of state.

The canopy will be borne by sixteen generals-adjutant, having the rank of major-general, and the cords will be held by sixteen having the rank of lieutenant-general.

Ladies of the Empress's chamber—A squadron of Horse Guards—the chief nobles of Russia, in threes, one of each three entering the cathedral—manufacturers and the chief merchants of Moscow in like order—a squadron of Horse Guards.

When the procession sets out, all the bells will be rung, and during its progress the military bands will play.

When their Majesties arrive at the church porch, the Metropolitan of Moscow will give them the cross to kiss, and the

Metropolitan of Novgorod will sprinkle them with holy water. On entering the church their Majesties will salute three times the sacred images, and will then seat themselves on the throne, and the priests standing on the steps of the throne will sing the imperial hymn—“*Misericordiam et judicium cantabo tibi, Domine.*”

While their Majesties are saluting the images, the bearers of the regalia will place themselves in the following order:—

The bearer of the crown will place it on the estrade of the throne on its table, and the smaller one will be placed on its table likewise.

The sceptre-bearer will stand on the platform of the throne on the right.

The orb-bearer on the left.

The robe-bearer of the Emperor on the first step of the throne to the right, and that of the Empress on the left.

The sword-bearer on the second step to the right.

The standard-bearer on the second step to the left.

The bearers of the Imperial Seal of the Order of St. Andrew on the third step,—the first to the right, the second to the left.

The heralds will precede the regalia, and will then range themselves on either side of the throne.

The chief marshals and masters of ceremonies will accompany their Majesties to the thrones, and place themselves on the first platform of the steps, face to face, and the assistants of their Majesties will stand behind the thrones, a little in advance.

The Grand Master of Ceremonies will stand on the ninth step, and the other Masters of Ceremonies on either side, between the pillars and the throne, facing each other.

Between the right pillar and the balustrade of the throne the Civil Governor of Moscow with two assistants, to spread out at the proper time the velvet and cloth of gold.

Between their Majesties and the regalia will stand the Minister of the Household, the Minister of War, and the general on service for the day.

The Commander of the Horse Guards will stand between the thrones, a little in the rear, with his sword drawn and his helmet in his hand, and near him two of the highest court officials, to raise the ends of the robes of their Majesties, with twelve assistants.

All these will be ranged on the two platforms of the throne, and the other officials forming part of the procession will take the various places assigned to them.

The coronation will be performed in the following manner:

The Metropolitan of Moscow will ascend to the uppermost step of the throne, and standing before the Emperor, will place before his Majesty, and require him to read, in a loud voice, so

as to be understood by all his subjects, his profession of the orthodox faith. The Metropolitan then presents to his Majesty an open book, and the Emperor will recite the Creed. After which the Metropolitan will say, "*Gratia Spiritûs Sancti sit semper tecum. Amen,*" and descend from the throne.

After the reading of the Gospels the Metropolitans will go up to the throne. The Emperor will take the ordinary star of St. Andrew, and give it to one of his assistants, and will direct that the imperial mantle with the diamond collar of the said order, shall be presented to him. The mantle will be presented to his Majesty, on two cushions, by the Metropolitans, who assist him to put it on; the Metropolitan of Moscow will then say—"*In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritûs Sancti*"—and one of the assistants will adjust the mantle.

After putting on the mantle, the Emperor will bow his head, and the Metropolitan of Moscow, having blessed him with the sign of the cross, imposes his hands on the Emperor's head in the form of a cross, and reads the two prayers which ordinarily follow the ritual.

When the prayers are finished, the Emperor orders the imperial crown to be presented to him. The functionary who has carried it in the procession brings it on a cushion to the Metropolitan, who presents it to his Majesty. *The Emperor takes the crown from the cushion, places it on his head,* and the Metropolitan reads a printed speech.

The Emperor then asks for the sceptre and the globe. The functionaries who have carried them in the procession bring them on a cushion to the Metropolitan of Moscow, who presents them to the Emperor, and reads another speech. The Emperor having taken the sceptre in his right hand, and the globe in his left, seats himself on his throne, and shortly afterwards lays down the regalia upon the cushions presented by the officials, who have borne them in the cortége. He calls the Empress to him, and she kneels before her august husband on a crimson velvet cushion laced with gold. The Monarch taking the crown off his head, touches the Empress's head with it, and then replaces it on his own.

The small crown is then presented to the Emperor, who places it on the head of the Empress, and the four ladies of honour approach and adjust it.

The imperial mantle with the collar of the order of St. Andrew, is then presented to the Emperor to put on the Empress, and it is adjusted by the ladies of honour.

The Emperor resumes the sceptre and globe; the Archdeacon proclaims all the imperial titles, and intones these lines:—"*Domine salvum fac Imperatorem et Domine salvam fac Imperatricem.*" The choir three times repeat—"Ad multos annos."

During the singing, the bells of all the churches will ring, and a salvo of 101 guns will be fired.

During this time the clergy, as well as all the assistants of both sexes, present their felicitations to the Emperor, bowing three times without quitting their places. The Empresses and the members of the august family also present their felicitations to his Majesty. Their imperial highnesses for this purpose ascend the throne.

When the ringing and salutes are ended, his Majesty, laying aside the sceptre and orb, will rise from his throne, and, kneeling, will read from a book given to him by the Metropolitan the appropriate prayers, the Metropolitan reading the same prayers, and all the assembly remaining on their knees until the Emperor rises.

After the prayers, the Metropolitan will make a short discourse to his Majesty, and the choir will sing a *Te Deum*; the bells will then be rung and the holy liturgy commenced, the Emperor giving his crown to the bearer, and, at the end of the liturgy, replaces it on his head.

At the reading of the gospels, the holy book is presented to their Majesties, who kiss it.

At the beginning of the anthem, the Governor of Moscow and his assistants will lay down the velvet and cloth of gold from the throne to the altar, the Archdeacon laying down the end at the altar for their Majesties to walk on.

At the end of the anthem, when the royal gate of the altar is opened, two arch-priests and the Archdeacon will announce to his Majesty that the time is come for him to be anointed. Then the Emperor, in his robes, with his assistants, and followed by the Empress, will approach the royal gate, the bearers of the regalia, and other officials, attending on either side.

The Emperor will stand upon the cloth of gold and the Empress between the throne and the steps of the altar. Around them will stand the Minister of the Household, the Minister of War, the Adjutant-General on duty, and the Commander of the Horse Guard with drawn swords; near them the bearers of the regalia with two senior officers of the Horse Guard near the commencement of the steps, with other officials in a semi-circle.

The Metropolitan of Moscow, taking the jewelled vase with the holy oil, will anoint the forehead of his Majesty, his eyes, nostrils, lips, chest, and hands, saying, "*Impressio doni Spiritus Sancti*," and the Metropolitans of Novogorod and St. Petersburg will wipe the traces of the chrism.

At the conclusion of the anointing, the bells will be rung, and a salute of 101 guns fired. The Emperor will then stand on the right side by the image of the Saviour, and the Empress will be

anointed in the same manner, and will then stand on the left side by the image of the Virgin.

The Metropolitan of Moscow will then lead the Emperor through the royal gate, within the altar screen, the other officiating prelates holding up the end of his robe. His Majesty, standing near the holy table, on the cloth of gold, will receive the sacrament, and after receiving the Lord's Supper, an arch-priest will bring the consecrated bread and the taper, and another will touch his mouth and hands therewith.

The Emperor will then return to the image of the Saviour, and the Empress will approach the royal gate,* and will in like manner receive the sacrament, and their Majesties will then return to the throne. At the end of the liturgy, all the officials will go out at the north door and take their places, and during that time the priests will read prayers before their Majesties, and, at the end, the Archdeacon will again pray for their long life, and the singers will sing "*Ad multos annos.*"

Finally, the sacred cross will be presented to their Majesties to kiss; and the Emperor, placing the crown on his head, and with the sceptre and orb in his hands, will receive three acclamations for the happy conclusion of his coronation and anointing.

Then the Empress Dowager, the Imperial Family, and the foreign Ambassadors, will go out by the south doors of the cathedral, and return to the palace in the same order as they arrived; but the Emperor and Empress will go by the north door, along a scarlet cloth, to the cathedral of the Archangels, under a canopy, entering it by the western door. Their Majesties will here kiss the sacred images, and salute the tombs of their ancestors, which being done, all shall wish them long life. In like manner they will visit the Cathedral of the Annunciation, the arch-priests receiving them at each cathedral with the cross and with holy water.

Throughout the procession the Emperor will bear the crown, sceptre, and orb, giving them to the bearers, when he kisses the sacred images. During the procession the bells will ring, and 101 guns be fired, and the military bands will play.

On the arrival of their Majesties at the Krasnoi portico, all in the procession, except the court officers, will remain without, and form in the same order to accompany their Majesties to the banquet in the Granovitaya Palace.

THE BANQUET AT THE GRANOVITAYA PALACE.

WHEN the Arch-Marshal announces that the banquet is ready, the Emperor and Empress with their suite, and the imperial family with the foreign ambassadors and their ladies, will pro-

* Females are not allowed to pass under this gate.

ceed to the Granovitaya Palace, the lines being kept by the Grenadiers of the Court.

The members of the council, the clergy, and other guests invited to the banquet, will stand at their places at table, the ladies on the left, the other guests on the right.

Their Majesties will ascend the throne, where a table of three covers will be prepared under a canopy—that for the Emperor in the middle, with the Empress Dowager on his right hand, and the Empress on his left. By the throne will stand the great officers of state, near them the great carver and the chief butlers—below the throne will stand four officers of Horse Guards with drawn swords, and two heralds near the throne.

Then the Minister of Finance will present the Empress with the coronation medals which will then be distributed.

The table for the imperial family and foreign princes will be laid in the “Tainik,” or private apartment.

At the command of his Majesty, the Chief Marshal and other officers will bring in the dishes, assisted by staff officers, and they will be placed on the table by the Great Marshal and the Marshal.

When the banquet is brought in, his Majesty will remove his crown, and give it, with the sceptre and orb, to the bearers, who will place them on tables prepared for them.

The Metropolitan will bless the tables, and their Majesties will sit down.

After the first dish, when his Majesty asks for drink, the clergy and other guests will bow, and sit down at their tables. The foreign ambassadors and their suites, and all those who do not remain to the dinner, will leave, and go to the various places appointed for them to dine in the Kremlin.

At tables, healths will be drunk to—

The Emperor, with a salute of sixty-one guns.

The Empress Dowager, with a salute of fifty-one guns.

The Empress, with a salute of fifty-one guns.

The Imperial Family, with a salute of thirty-one guns.

The Clergy and all faithful subjects, with a salute of twenty-one guns.

The cups will be handed by the chief butler and his assistants, the toasts given with flourishes of trumpets, and there will be vocal and instrumental music during the dinner.

After the banquet, the Emperor and the two Empresses will retire to the inner apartments with the same attendance.

On the day following the coronation there will be a dinner for the clergy, and first two classes of the guests.

On an appointed day and hour their Majesties will receive, in the throne-room, the congratulations of the Synod, the

ministers, and other bodies in the state, and of the ladies, at an early period.

After the coronation will be given :

A ball at the Granovitaya Palace,

A grand theatrical spectacle,

A ball in the Alexandrovsky Hall,

Festins and amusements for the people,

A masquerade and supper at the palace,

Fireworks.

The first three days after the coronation there will be ringing of bells and illuminations.

On one of the days medals will be distributed to the people at twenty churches.

DECORATION OF THE HALL CALLED GRANOVITAIA PALATA.

THE column supporting the vault of the hall is adorned with ancient vases and salvers of gold and silver.

The walls are hung with crimson velvet, studded with imperial eagles; above the windows all the arms of the imperial title, surrounded with trophies; between the lower windows, on the wall, candelabra of gilt bronze, representing double-headed eagles; the floor is covered with scarlet cloth.

The imperial throne, raised on three steps, is adorned in the following manner:—A dais, with a lofty canopy of gold cloth sown with imperial eagles, and hanging over the imperial mantle lined with ermine, having in the centre a shield bearing the little arms of the empire, surrounded with a gilt border, and adorned with the initials of his Majesty the Emperor. The canopy of the dais is surmounted by a crown, placed on a gold cushion, fringed, and with tassels in the colours of the empire. This shield, adorned with his Majesty's initials, has on each side a smaller shield with the same initials, surrounded by the collar of the order of St. Andrew, and adorned with military appendages. At each corner of the cornice, a plume of ostrich feathers in the colours of the empire; the fringes and tassels of the dais are also in the colours of the empire.

The platform and steps of the throne are covered with crimson velvet trimmed with gold lace, and at each of the front angles an ancient silver vase is placed on a pedestal.

On the platform of the throne, under the dais, on the spot usually occupied by the imperial thrones, are placed the three ancient thrones, brought for this occasion from the Cathedral of the Assumption.

Between the imperial throne and the window to the left of the throne, a table for bearing the crown, sceptre, and globe; this

table is covered with crimson velvet trimmed with gold lace, and over the velvet is spread a cloth of gold similarly trimmed with gold lace.

At some distance from the throne tables are spread for the persons invited to the banquet.

To the left of the door of entrance there has been fitted up for the orchestra a balcony hung with crimson gold-fringed velvet, and to the right the buffet for refreshments, which is covered with silver plate.

THE END.

Let us suppose that the given equation is of the form

$$ax^2 + bx + c = 0$$
 where a, b, c are constants, and $a \neq 0$. We can divide the equation by a to get

$$x^2 + \frac{b}{a}x + \frac{c}{a} = 0$$
 Now we can complete the square. We add $\left(\frac{b}{2a}\right)^2$ to both sides of the equation to get

$$x^2 + \frac{b}{a}x + \left(\frac{b}{2a}\right)^2 = -\frac{c}{a} + \left(\frac{b}{2a}\right)^2$$
 The left side is now a perfect square, and we can write it as

$$\left(x + \frac{b}{2a}\right)^2 = \frac{b^2 - 4ac}{4a^2}$$
 Taking the square root of both sides, we get

$$x + \frac{b}{2a} = \pm \frac{\sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a}$$
 Finally, we solve for x to get the quadratic formula:

$$x = \frac{-b \pm \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a}$$

This formula gives us the solutions to any quadratic equation. The discriminant, $b^2 - 4ac$, tells us how many real solutions the equation has. If it is positive, there are two real solutions. If it is zero, there is one real solution. If it is negative, there are no real solutions.

Let us now consider the case where the equation is not in standard form. For example, we might have

$$3x^2 - 5x + 2 = 7$$
 In this case, we first move all terms to one side of the equation to get

$$3x^2 - 5x - 5 = 0$$
 Now we can use the quadratic formula to solve for x .

Let us now consider the case where the equation is a difference of squares. For example, we might have

$$x^2 - 9 = 0$$
 This equation can be factored as

$$(x - 3)(x + 3) = 0$$
 Setting each factor equal to zero, we get

$$x - 3 = 0 \quad \text{or} \quad x + 3 = 0$$
 Solving these equations, we get

$$x = 3 \quad \text{or} \quad x = -3$$

Let us now consider the case where the equation is a sum of squares. For example, we might have

$$x^2 + 4x + 4 = 0$$
 This equation can be factored as

$$(x + 2)^2 = 0$$
 Taking the square root of both sides, we get

$$x + 2 = 0$$
 Solving for x , we get

$$x = -2$$

Let us now consider the case where the equation is a cubic equation. For example, we might have

$$x^3 - 2x^2 - 3x + 6 = 0$$
 This equation can be factored as

$$(x - 2)(x + 1)(x - 3) = 0$$
 Setting each factor equal to zero, we get

$$x - 2 = 0 \quad \text{or} \quad x + 1 = 0 \quad \text{or} \quad x - 3 = 0$$
 Solving these equations, we get

$$x = 2 \quad \text{or} \quad x = -1 \quad \text{or} \quad x = 3$$



Fac-simile of the Imperial Seal.

Murphy, John

Russia at the Time of the Coronation of Alexandre II; being a Series of
Lettres addressed from Moscow and St. Petersburg to the 'Daily News'

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